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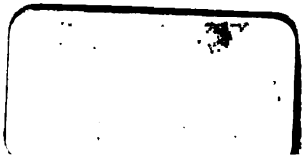
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Drawn on the Spot by M.r Alper.n Pickover. *Melville sculp.*

VIEW FROM THE NORTH BRINK, WISBECH.

This Plate, Engraved at the Expence of Jonathan Pickover Esq.r is Inscribed to him with the sincere Respect & Regard
of his Obliged, Friend, WM WATSON

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AN

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

ANCIENT TOWN AND PORT

OF

WISBECH,

IN THE ISLE OF ELY, IN THE COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE,

AND OF THE CIRCUMJACENT

TOWNS AND VILLAGES,

THE DRAINAGE OF THE GREAT LEVEL OF THE FENS,

THE

ORIGIN OF THE ROYAL FRANCHISE OF THE ISLE OF ELY, &c.

WITH ENGRAVINGS.

BY

WILLIAM WATSON, Esq. F.A.S.

Sic toties versa est fortuna locorum
Vidi ego, quod fuerat quondam solidissima tellus,
Esse fretum, vidi factas, ex æquore terras.

Ovid's Met. xv. 261.

WISBECH:
PRINTED BY AND FOR H. AND J. LEACH.
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1827.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

EARL OF HARDWICKE, K.G.

LORD LIEUTENANT AND CUSTOS ROTULORUM OF THE COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE,

HIGH STEWARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE CORPORATION OF BEDFORD LEVEL, F.R.S. AND A.S.

&c. &c.

YOUR Lordship, it is well known, has at all times taken a lively interest in the welfare and improvement of the Fens in general, and particularly of the Town of which the History is attempted in the following pages. The owners and occupiers of this country are under great obligations to your Lordship for your peculiar attention to their interests on all occasions, and they duly appreciate your recent exertions in Parliament, whereby they will in future be relieved from many heavy burthens to which they were formerly liable, in carrying through the two houses the requisite bills for the drainage and security of these uncertain Districts.

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Under what more appropriate auspices, therefore, than your Lordship's patronage, could this humble endeavour meet the public eye?

The favours received from your Lordship in earlier life confirm the propriety of the dedication of this volume to your Lordship, and duty and inclination alike influence me.

I thankfully acknowledge your Lordship's condescension, in becoming the patron of an undertaking which stands but too much in need of powerful protection. I shall ever venerate the public and private virtues by which you are as much distinguished as by your noble birth; and earnestly wishing for a long continuance of health and felicity to your Lordship, I have the honour to subscribe myself, with the utmost respect and attachment,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's sincere
and most obedient Servant,
WILLIAM WATSON.

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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH topographical histories are in general dull and uninteresting, still for some readers they have a sort of relish belonging to them, which is to be attributed rather to the love we feel for the place of our birth or long residence, than to any real value in the narrative. All ranks and conditions of men naturally wish to know something of the first state of scenes endeared to them by habit and many pleasing recollections, and if fixed by providence in situations remote from the home of their earlier years, every account of what were once the haunts of their youth speaks at once to the inmost feelings, and with magic influence revives associations which time and distance had repressed but not destroyed. No person has hitherto, to my knowledge, given himself the trouble of inquiring into the ancient history of the town of Wisbech, which undoubtedly is a place of considerable antiquity, and in former times could boast of being dignified with a castle. The condition of places we know is subject to continual vicissitudes, ebbing and flowing in regard to trade, extent of buildings, and number of inhabitants, which the History of Wisbech will exemplify. Having lately held the chief annual

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appointment in the corporation of the town, conferred upon me for the rather unusual period of two successive years, I considered it a part of my duty to examine the ancient records belonging to the body corporate. I undertook the task, a pleasing one to me, of methodizing and arranging such records, and in my progress discovered that a tolerably regular series of transactions was continued from the year 1379, when an establishment for a religious guild was there formed, down to the present period. Of these records, after having arranged and translated them, I made an index, which I presented to the capital burgesses: from this occurrence the idea of collecting materials for a history of the town afterwards suggested itself. Thus, what at first served as an amusement insensibly grew beneath my hands to its present form. The proceedings hereinafter detailed relative to the guild and corporation are extracted from those records. The history of the castle, church, and other objects, has been drawn from the best and most authentic sources, both printed and manuscript, within my reach; and by way of further variety, a short account is introduced of that important tract of country called "the Great Level of the Fens." I am sensible that various opinions have been entertained as to the original state of this extensive district, and especially as to the people by whom the first efforts were made for rendering it fit for the habitation of man; and that many famed antiquaries think the works usually attributed to the Romans were constructed by the Iceni, or other native tribes. That stupendous work at the other extremity of the country, the fosse or trench of which is called by common people "The Devil's Ditch," is an embankment so vast as to excite the astonishment of those who behold it,

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and is supposed to have been raised by the Iceni, and if so, it shews them to have been capable of operations of great magnitude. In all questions of this nature much must be left to conjecture, no record of the early state of the country having come down to us. It has been my endeavour to account for the various changes in the level on simple principles and causes, without having recourse to preternatural ones, and the result of such inquiries and opinions is now offered to the public with feelings of unfeigned deference and respect. Very little of originality or novelty will be found in the following sheets, indeed, it is not worthy to be called a history, but an attempt towards one, with a view to stimulate some person of greater ability to present the public with a full and complete history. The design has been to produce a faithful, correct, and authentic record of the persons and things treated of. No other praise is sought than that of industry and exactness of description, and it will be felt more than a compensation, if no unfavourable judgment should be passed upon this humble performance, for although most feelingly conscious of my own incompetency, I was still unwilling to let the materials which I had collected be dispersed and lost, and therefore ventured to submit the result to public notice. In arranging and classing the different portions of the work, it was thought best to separate and divide them under three heads, first, the history of the Great Level; secondly, that part which constitutes the isle of Ely; and lastly, the ancient and present state of Wisbech, with the castle and other public buildings and occurrences. I am not conscious I have omitted any thing which appeared to merit attention, and which might be deemed consistent with the nature of such a publication; but I am at the same time sensible that, notwithstanding

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I shall beg leave to conclude this preface in the words of Addison, expressive as they are of views and feelings analogous in no small degree with my own, in respect to the present undertaking: "Custom has a wonderful "efficacy in making every thing pleasant. What was "at first an exercise becomes at length an entertain- "ment. I have heard one of the greatest geniuses "this age has produced, (Dr. Atterbury) who had "been trained up in all the polite studies of antiquity, "assure me, on his being obliged to search into several "rolls and records, that notwithstanding such an "employment was at first dry and irksome to him, he "at last took an incredible pleasure in it."

Spectator, vol. vi. No. 447.

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Page 88 and Index, for *Anna, Queen*, read *Anna, King.*
—— 216, lines 9 and 15, for *Heame's*, read *Hearne's.*
—— 239, (Note) for *Jerrour*, read *Ferrour.*
—— 252, for *gland*, read *land.*
—— 266, for *Ickwich*, read *Fenwick.*
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—— 289, (Note) for *Burly*, read *Busby.*
—— 349, (Note) for *John Hancock*, read *Joseph Hancock.*
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—— 530, 5th line from the bottom, for *Mercy*, read *Measure.*

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HISTORY OF WISBECH,

&c.

INTRODUCTION.

THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTRY.

THE Sacred Scriptures inform us, that after the Flood, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, (the three sons of Noah) as their issue multiplied, separated themselves into the several quarters of the earth, and that by them and their descendants the whole world was peopled;—"By "these were the Isles of the Gentiles divided in their "lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, "in their nations." *

Gomer, the son of Japhet, gave name to the Gomerians, who were afterwards called Cimbri and Cimmerii. This name spread itself through Gaul into Germany, and from the former country, there is little doubt that some of

* Gen. x. 5. This concise chapter is one of the most ancient, authentic, and venerable records in existence.—It explains to us what all historians were ignorant of—the origin of nations: Medes, Assyrians, Persians, Grecians, Egyptians, Lydians, and Syrians.

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their colonies crossed the sea into Britain; for it is agreed by British antiquaries, that the most ancient inhabitants of our island were called Cymri, or, as it is sometimes pronounced, Cimbri; and the Welsh, to this day, call themselves Kumero, Cymro, and Kumeri, and their language, Kumeraeg.*

Tacitus, in his Life of Agricola, intimates, that the religion of the Gauls and Britons may be proved to be the same, from their superstitions being of a similar nature.† We have no authentic account when the Kimmerians first passed out of Asia, but that they were in Europe seven hundred years before the Christian Æra, may be safely stated.‡

About the fifty-fourth year before the birth of Christ, Britain was invaded by the Romans, at which time its inhabitants were divided into many small tribes, under distinct and independent chieftains; but a general commander was, in cases of imminent danger, chosen to direct the whole. The landing of Cæsar, the bold resistance he met with, and the uneasiness of the sturdy Britons under a foreign yoke, have been often related and are well known. The victories of Cæsar were, however, unproductive, and of little moment. The Britons, who are represented as being stout and valiant, were allowed to remain unmolested for nearly a century afterwards, and were rather allies than tributaries of the Romans, until about the seventh year of the reign of the

* Camden, p. 11.

† The words of Tacitus are "Eorum sacra deprehendas, superstitionum "persuasione." Vit. Agricolæ.

‡ Turner's Anglo-Saxons, vol. i. p. 2.

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emperor Claudius, (A. D. 49.) when, jealousies arising, and civil wars breaking out among the natives, the Romans seized the opportunity of reducing them more completely under their power.

Caractacus (an eminent British warrior of the tribe of the Silures *) stood forward to rescue his country from its proud invaders, and by his bravery harassed his enemies for several years; but, in the end, his troops were defeated, and the noble Caractacus, having sought the protection of Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes,† was betrayed by her, and delivered up into the hands of the conquerors, and afterwards carried a captive to Rome, where he made his powerful and celebrated harangue before the assembled senate. About this time that part of the island which comprehends the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and Huntingdon, was inhabited by the "Iceni," probably so termed from the wedge-like form of their territory—the Britons in their language calling a wedge "Iken."‡ The Iceni, who were a powerful people, and not yet wasted by war, next attacked the Roman settlements, but were at length defeated, and Prasutagus, their king, then in a dying state, with the hope of preserving his kingdom to his family in peace, made the emperor Nero and his own daughters co-heirs to his great treasures. This disposal of his power failed to produce its intended effect; for after his decease, his territories were seized upon and plundered by the Roman troops; his illustrious wife,

* People inhabiting Herefordshire, &c.

† Inhabitants of the tract now called Yorkshire, Durham, Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland.

‡ Some imagine it to be derived from Uic or Uicon, that is, "Brave "Men," but Whitaker says the genuine name was Ceni, Y-cen-i, the "Head ones."

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Boadicea, having opposed these unjust proceedings, suffered, with her daughters, the most shameful treatment, through their lust and cruelty, and many of the nobles were deprived of their paternal estates. Exasperated by these insults and injuries, the Iceni again took up arms, and their example was speedily followed by the other states. Boadicea was appointed to head the common forces; her military exploits were glorious, and she gained several successive victories; but on sustaining a defeat by Suetonius, an experienced Roman commander, she hastily terminated her existence by poison.

Although frequent revolts ensued, the Britons could never afterwards make head against their invaders, but gradually fell into a supine and slothful state. At length the great strength of the Roman empire began to consume itself; the imperial armies found sufficient employment in supporting their own power at home; and as their interest declined, the barbarous nations of the north broke into their rich provinces, and the whole frame of their affairs became so disordered, that about the year 448 after Christ, the empire of Rome in Britain finally expired.

From this period, no author of credit having noticed the Iceni, we can infer nothing certain about them from history. Their ancient name may, however, still be traced in Ikenild Street, one of the four Roman highways running through the island, which extended from Yarmouth in Norfolk, to and beyond Barley in Hertfordshire, giving in its course names to several villages, as Ickworth, Icklingham, Ickleton, Iksnig, now Exning, &c.*

* From Barley to Royston, it divides the counties of Cambridge and Hertford. From Ickleford, it runs by Tring, crosses Buckinghamshire and

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This part of the island was next occupied by the warlike Saxons, who, under their leaders, Hengist and Horsa, landed in the isle of Thanet about the year 449 or 450, having been invited over, after the departure of the Romans, to assist the natives against the Scots and Picts. These auxiliaries, quarrelling with their friends, soon found means to settle themselves in different parts of the country, and succeeded in establishing therein seven kingdoms,* one of which, comprising, among other counties, that of Cambridge, was called East Anglia, or the kingdom of the East Angles.

The Danes afterwards gained possession of this country, and held it until king Edward the Elder wrested it from them by force, and added it to his own kingdom of the West Saxons.†

The country of East Anglia is described by an historian who flourished in the year 970,‡ as being encompassed on the south and east by the ocean, and on the north by the moisture of large fens, which, arising almost in the heart of the island, descended in great rivers into the sea; the inner parts being a rich soil, and famous for pasturage, presented in summer a most delightful green prospect. The south part of this

Oxfordshire, passes the Thames at Goring, and extends to the west part of England.

* The Saxons, though they were divided into seven kingdoms, were for the most part subject only to one head, who was stiled King of the English Nation: of these kings Hengist was the first.

† A. D. 908. Egbert was the first sole monarch of the English. He conquered Kent, and laid the foundation of the sole monarchy about the year 827, which put an end to the Saxon heptarchy.

‡ Abbo Floriacensis, in his Life of king Edmund. Also Camden, p. 366.

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country, belonging to the county of Cambridge, was called by the Saxons Eliȝ, (now the isle of Ely) which some derive from the Greek Ελος, a marsh; or it may be deduced from the old British word "Helig," signifying a willow, or from "Heli," salt or marsh land gained from the sea.*

The inhabitants of this and the rest of the low country were called by the natives Gyrvii, "Gyr," in English, signifying the same as "Palus," a deep fen, in Latin.

At the northern extremity of the county of Cambridge is situated the town of Wisbech, the most considerable place in the isle, the ancient and present state of which, it is the principal object of this work to describe. But inquiry shall first be made into the origin of the Great Level of the Fens or Low Country; how it became overflowed by the sea, and how afterwards gained therefrom, and into the course and outfalls of the rivers passing through the same.

* Salt was formerly made in great abundance upon the sea shore. The hills all along upon the sea bank are called Salt Hills, such as at Fleet, Holbeach, &c. and we find the name given to places, as Salter's-Lode, Saltash, Saltfleet, &c.

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THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT LEVEL.

The Level in its Original State.

It is supposed that there has been a time when the whole great level of the fens, with the adjacent low country, was one vast open bay, where the tides freely flowed and reflowed, and that by the quantity of sand and earthy matter brought by the united action of winds and tides, the bay became progressively more and more shallow, until, in process of time, the depositions becoming higher than the rise of the neap tides, and growing over with grass, a habitable country was gradually formed.

The upland waters, in their passage to the sea, would of themselves force channels in various directions through the supposed depositions of earthy matter, as would also the rivers flowing from the interior parts of the island. A large district of country, fertile in its nature, being in time gained, inhabitants would soon be induced to settle there. The surface, in the course of ages, being raised by alluvial deposit and accumulation of daily warp from the flowing in of the tides, would become sound and dry; and the rivers running through the level, and keeping for the most part their accustomed

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courses, would contribute their share to the nourishment of trees, with which ancient historians represent this country to have abounded.*

The large tract of land supposed to have been thus formed, and which extends into, and is bounded by the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Northampton, comprising no less than 400,000 acres, has, no doubt, undergone many changes and alterations. Dr. Stukeley† adopts the hypothesis before stated, viz. That at some early period, the waters of the sea overflowed the whole of this country. When the land had at length emerged from the waters by some such process as that already described, it is not impossible that it had a natural fall to the sea, and that it progressively became wooded and cultivated. Sir William Dugdale, in his learned "History of Embanking and Draining," conceives this vast level to have once been firm dry land, and so far from being annoyed with any extraordinary inundations of the sea, or stagnations from the fresh waters,‡ to have been plentifully supplied with wood and timber trees, and that some great land flood, many ages since, meeting with an obstruction at the natural outfall, spread itself over the face of the whole level, and that the waters, ever since the covering of the same, have produced a moor now grown up to so great thickness,

* Smeaton.

† Dr. William Stukeley, whose name and memory are respected by every true lover of English antiquities, and whose literary disquisitions will be always considered curious, was a native of Holbeach, distant about twelve miles from Wisbech, and was born in the year 1689, and admitted of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in 1703.

‡ Dugdale, p. 171.

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Mr. Atkins, of Outwell,* a most experienced person, and known to have taken infinite pains in his inquiries into the ancient state of the fens, says, "That the fens, "which are now, were formerly in the nature of meadow "lands, fruitful, healthful, and very profitable to the "inhabitants, affording much relief to the people of the "high countries in the time of great drought;" and he instances Peterborough as formerly called Medehamstead, on account of the meadows there; and further observes that Ely fen and Peterborough great fen were once forest, and afforded habitation and shelter for deer, &c. which may account for the horns of those animals having been dug up, in the making of drains in several places within this district. Whilst, therefore, the tide had its free course up the rivers, the country was not materially annoyed, and the rivers also, by the constant motion of the waters, being scoured and made deeper, as well as preserved in good condition, the collective body of land waters, acting in conjunction with the tides, preserved and improved the outfall of the great level.

The Arrival of the Romans.

At what particular time this large tract of fen was secured from the sea by artificial means, no sufficient testimony is left to us on record; a circumstance from which we may infer that the attempt took place at a very early period. It is most probable that the Romans began the work whilst they were masters here, as they remained in possession of this island several centuries,

* See Biography after mentioned under the name of "Atkins:" he lived about 1620.

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A.D. 40. and kept in pay 80,000 soldiers. It is not to be supposed that the Britons made any considerable endeavours to improve or alter the course of nature, as we know them to have been originally a people unskilled in the arts and sciences, contenting themselves with mean and uncomfortable habitations. It may, therefore, be presumed, that the Romans on their arrival found this vast level, or the greatest part thereof, to be a sound fruitful soil, covered with wood and trees, and that, as these woods impeded the progress of their arms by the security afforded to the natives, they were induced to destroy and clear them away. An instance of this kind occurs in the early history of Flanders, which, on the invasion of it by the victorious Cæsar, he found so full of woods and morasses, that, being unable to conquer it, he at length cut down the woods, that he might the more easily subdue the inhabitants. This being a description of country similar to these fens, and invaded by the same people, it is not improbable that the like means were used to facilitate and complete the Roman conquests here.*

Embankment of the Country.

Presuming, then, that the Romans found this level in the state described in the last chapter, to be a fruitful soil, and probably much more rich and fertile than the upland ground, it is reasonable to suppose that they were afterwards induced to bestow upon it the expense and cost of raising and erecting strong barriers or banks of earth

* Julius Cæsar says, "The Britons call a thick wood, inclosed with "a rampart and a ditch, a town, to which they retire for the security of "themselves and cattle against an invading enemy." De Bell. Gall. lib. 5.

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next the sea, in order to defend it from the overflowing of the spring tides, to which it was exposed. This presumption is strengthened by the well-known industry of the Romans, and the excellent discipline of their troops, who would, no doubt, (were it for the purpose alone of preserving them from idleness) be kept in exercise in works of a useful nature, such as the construction of embankments. In corroboration of this opinion, there is a passage in the life of Agricola, by Tacitus, where the Roman general is said to have employed the Britons "in clearing the woods and draining "the marshes." That the Romans were settled in many parts of this great level, the number of their coins, urns, and other antiquities * found here, and the causeway supposed to have been made by the emperor Severus, seem to manifest. This causeway extended twenty-four miles across the fens, from Denver to Peterborough, and is now covered with moor from three to five feet in thickness. When, therefore, these countries were once recovered from the sea by the defence of strong banks, the cultivation thereof naturally succeeded as an object of public concern. And although the Romans might, in the first instance, for the sake of more easy subjugation, have cleared away many of the ancient woods, they would afterwards, when the country was completely subjected to their

* At Walpole, a tenant of Mr. Cony's, under the bank, (still called the Roman bank) digging three feet deep in his garden, found many Roman bricks, and an aqueduct made of earthen pipes. Sir Andrew Fountain, upon inspecting them, pronounced them "Roman," made of the same earth as their urns. Bib. Top. Brit. Lincolnshire Antiquities, vol. 1, in letter from E. Cony, Esq. to Roger Gale, Esq. 8th Nov. 1727. In cutting through the drains in the fens, divers urns have been dug up in various places; all, undoubtedly, testimonies that some of the Roman colonies had their residence in these parts.

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power, and secured through their own labour or that of the natives, by embankments from the ocean, naturally endeavour to render it as beneficial as possible, and by way of adding to its ornament, set about replanting the same. Trees would then thrive well, and as the Romans continued in the island for about four centuries altogether, they would find these marshes improve into a fine condition; and any trees which they might think proper to plant, or to encourage the growth of, would, in the course of a few years, come to considerable maturity. As nature acts uniformly under similar circumstances, there is reason to believe that the great level would have been a flourishing country to this very day, had not her operations been interrupted by the works of art. To the latter, therefore, and not to the former, we must look for the great deterioration which has taken place. It is, indeed, considered by many, that even the Romans embanked the country too early; had the tides and land waters been suffered to spread themselves over the surface a few centuries longer, the lower parts of the then marshes would have been elevated by the continued subsidence of silth. There would have been no fens, and the drainage of the whole level would have been perfect and natural, and would have saved many millions in expense.*

The Arrival of the Saxons.

A.D. 448. The calamities of the Romans at home having caused them to recall their troops, they finally abandoned this island, and resigned their dominion in Britain about the year 448. The Picts and Scots then attacked the dis-

* Chapman's Facts and Remarks.

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tressed Britons, who, in their then harassed condition, had no resource but to crave the assistance of the Saxons, by whose aid they overcame their invaders. But the Saxons having gotten a footing in the island, and perceiving the exuberance of the land to which they had been invited, became desirous to possess it. They thereupon, sending for great numbers of their countrymen to join them, obtained such advantages over the Britons, that at length they formed a permanent settlement in this country; and when once established, their chief leaders appropriated to themselves the countries which each had been most instrumental in conquering, until after a long and violent contest, the whole was formed into a heptarchy, consisting of seven kingdoms. One body under the command of Uffa, having seized upon the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, and the isle of Ely, their leader assumed the sovereignty thereof, by the title of "King of the East "Angles."* But what attention he and his successors paid, and, indeed, whether they paid any, towards the exclusion of the sea, and the more effectual drainage of the lower parts of their dominions, is, in the total silence of authentic history, matter of uncertain conjecture. A.D. 575.

Decay of Embankments by reason of intestine troubles, and the Condition of the Country after such Decay.

Amongst many causes assigned for the decay of the outfalls, it has been supposed that after the country was abandoned by the Romans, the banks and drains became

* This kingdom was founded about A. D. 575, and ended in 792. The first Christian king was Redbald, who began his reign in 599. Edmund, who, in opposing the Danes, was murdered at St. Edmundsbury, was the last king of the East Angles.

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neglected. During the contest between the Britons and Saxons, the inhabitants would be too much occupied to attend to the bulwarks which had been constructed by the Romans, and had served for ages as defences against the encroachment of the sea; and as the Anglo-Saxons were not remarkable for their skill in erecting and forming barriers against the ocean, any sudden accident by a breach in the banks, during these unsettled times, would cause a desolation so great, that such part of the country would, for a time, become depopulated and again lost, the inhabitants themselves being unable to attempt its recovery.

When any such breach of the banks took place, the land floods would in their course be diverted, and prevented from reaching the proper outfall; the rivers, likewise, being robbed of a considerable part of the ebbs, which, whilst the banks were preserved in a good condition, were accustomed to return through them, would choke up and decay; add to which, these waters continuing to lie a very long time upon the lands, the original soil would become softened and dissolved, and by mixing with the sullage and mud brought with them, the very nature and composition thereof would be entirely altered, and those lands, from fruitful pasturage, be at length turned into a wilderness of flags and sedge; and as these grew up, obstructions would increase, until in time the whole country was changed into a deep fen, such as St. Guthlac * describes the great level to have been. And these effects, together with the subsiding silth from the sea water, would compose such strata as the country is now found to consist of.†

* He lived about A. D. 700. † Ellesb, p. 256.

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The soil, becoming so altered, would be naturally conducive to the growth of reeds and rushes, as well as to the support of alders and other aquatic plants, and the rank vegetation would increase the difficulty of the land floods in getting to the rivers, so that the level would become the more annoyed; and the waters being thus interrupted in their passage to the rivers, the outfall would, for want of a sufficient supply of back water, begin to decrease in depth, and to choke up; and by degrees every thing would contribute and concur, as it were, in bringing on a general inundation.

That several parts of the level were incumbered with reeds and alders, which in some places served for the harbour and shelter of deer,* and were a part of the king's forest, appears from a presentment made 34th Edward I.

How it was regained.

This country must have remained a long time in a desolate condition before it was again recovered, if we may judge from the vast accretion of soil which has taken place. We find the surface of the fens raised in some parts from ten to sixteen feet; it being recorded, that about a mile from Magdalen bridge, at the setting down of a sluice, there were discovered, at the depth of sixteen feet, divers furze-bushes, and also nut-trees pressed down flat, with nuts sound and firm lying by them, the bushes and trees standing in solid earth, below the silth

* In 1305, it was presented, that the tenants of the abbots of Ramsey, and of Thorney in Whittlesea, had wasted all the fen of King's-delph of the alders, hassocks, and rushes, estimated at 1,000 acres, so that the king's deer could not have harbour there as they had before. Dug. p. 367.

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brought up by the inundation of the sea. And at the setting down of Skirbeck sluice, near Boston, a smith's forge was found at the same depth, covered with silth, and all the tools thereunto belonging, with horse-shoes and other things made of iron. Also, in the year 1636, when Wisbech river was deepened, the workmen, at eight feet below the then bottom, came to another, which was stony, and found therein, at several distances, boats which had lain there overwhelmed with silth for many ages. So, likewise, at Salter's Lode, at the digging of a foundation by the adventurers in their great work of drainage, the silth was observed to be ten feet in thickness, and next below that, were three feet of firm moor, and then blueish gault, which the workmen judged from its appearance to have been originally silth. Then below that, a moor of three feet in thickness, much firmer and clearer than the other; and lastly, whitish clay, which is supposed to have been the natural and bottom soil from the beginning. As there is no record when this tract of country was first gained, neither is there any of its recovery; but it may be presumed, that as the contentions and differences between the Britons and Saxons ceased, and their affairs became more settled
A.D. by the establishment of the Mercian kingdom,* the
600. inhabitants began to turn their minds to renewed improvements, and to set about the reparation of neglected embankments. This would lead them to a cultivation of the country, by such methods as were most agreeable

* This kingdom began A. D. 582, and ended 827. It was one of the largest of the heptarchy, and contained Huntingdon, Lincoln, and fifteen other counties. Ceolred, ninth king of Mercia, levied an army to pursue the Danes about 712, and annexed the jurisdiction of the isle of Ely and the revenues of the monastery to the crown, which retained them until the reign of king Edgar, A. D. 972.

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to the soil, and the nature and situation thereof.* Dugdale, speaking of the low country, says, "Our "ancestors, the Saxons, observing the extraordinary "fertility of the soil, seated themselves in this country," of which there is evidence from the survey taken by king William, shewing that the towns now in being were all existing in the days of king Edward the Confessor, and might probably have been so for divers preceding ages. The church of Ely was possessed of Walpole long before the time of the Confessor, and it was a place of no small note as giving birth to St. Goderick, the hermit.† And although time and the accumulation of sullage heightened the surface, still the old towns might stand near the places where they now are, as the churches may probably stand upon foundations laid on the old surface of the country, notwithstanding the actual ground upon which the houses are now built is much higher than the level in ancient times.

It has been an inquiry, by what means the level was so drowned as that woods should be torn up by the roots, and so great a proportion of silth brought in as to cover the ground to such an extraordinary depth? We might perhaps reasonably reply, that the very deposits of the tides would in time form a barrier, so as to prevent

* The Pomentin Fens, in Latium, had been drained by Cornelius Cethegus, the consul, and made a rich and populous country, but when the maintenance of the works was neglected, the waters again by degrees gained upon the land, so that in Vespasian's time, these fens were become so re-stagnated, that it was then esteemed a miracle they should ever have been so well drained and inhabited as they had been.—Yet they were again drained and the land recovered by the emperor Trajan.

† He lived about 1070. Dug. p. 244.

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the water passing through the fens to the estuary below, and that by successive irruptions of the sea, the silth would be deposited and the woods destroyed.

The country is known to be, at this day, destitute of wood and timber, although numbers of trees, overgrown with moor through a long time of stagnation of waters, have for many years been taken up in various parts of the level; and multitudes of roots of large trees, at the bottom and sides of drains, have also been found standing as they had grown, three feet under the moorish soil; whilst from others, the bodies had manifestly been sawn off, and taken down by the hands of men, and that, not as if in a way of profit or use, some appearing to be burnt and others sawn off and lying useless, so that it may be judged, that in all probability, the latter were taken down for military purposes, to clear the way and destroy the shelter of the natives who had been secured thereby; and if so, the trees found burnt, or severed from their roots, may be presumed to have been taken down by the Romans. Most of them may have been indigenæ or natives of the soil in which they grew, until the district became fen by the overflowing of the rivers, or by violent inundations of the sea, destroying the banks originally raised by the Romans.*

Dugdale, in his invaluable work, states, that it has been imagined by some, that an earthquake may have

* All the trees would first decay near the ground, where they were sometimes wet and sometimes dry, and finally fall into the water, where the mud and decayed vegetative matter, which now constitutes the rich fen moor, would ultimately cover them to the present depth. Elliotb.

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caused the great change in the country, and, accordingly, adduces an instance of one happening A. D. 368, in the consulship of Valens, which overthrew not only several cities, but altered the very bounds of the sea. With every deference to this high authority, we are unwilling to attribute the change to any such cause, having no recorded account that this happy island has ever been considerably affected by any extraordinary convulsion of nature.

The same learned writer observes in another place, that William of Malmsbury,* an authentic historian, represents Thorney a very paradise for beauty of country, and that he had in his own time received from credible testimony, that upon the cutting of certain moats at Whittlesey by F. Underwood, Esq.† there were found about seven feet deep, (through absolute moor) firm ground and swathes of mowed grass lying perfect and not consumed, by which, he observes, it is manifest that some excessive rain, falling in the summer time, had caused such a flood of fresh waters, as then meeting with an obstruction in the outfall in regard of the silth there contracted by a long season of dry weather, the usual current of the waters to the sea was so hindered, that being forced back, they overflowed the whole level, and kept it, for the most part, under water, until the general undertaking of drainage. It is, therefore, not improbable that some such causes as those just enumerated, succeeded by a general inundation and superfluity of waters, may have been the means of altering the entire

* He wrote in the time of Henry II.—1155.

† Dug. p. 360.—He says, these moats were cut about twenty years before his time, which would bring the period to about 1635.

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face of the country, and tearing up the very trees and woods with which it once abounded.

If we now turn our views to the rivers, and consider the alterations occasioned by them, we shall find that the obstructions in the outfall would, in process of time, materially change the face of this extensive district; we shall, therefore, next state

The Rise and Course of the Rivers passing through the Level, the Grand Outfall whereof was at Wisbeck.

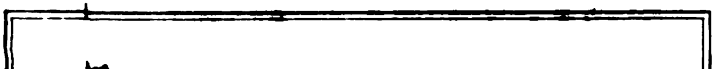
First, the Grant, which, having its origin about Ashwell, in Hertfordshire, and bringing with it the waters of part of that county and part of Essex, passes through Cambridgeshire, and unites itself to a branch of the Ouze below Stretham Mere.

The Ouse* rises at a certain spring called Ouse-well, near Brackley, in Northamptonshire, and passing through part of Buckingham and Bedfordshire, descends by Huntingdon,† and enters Cambridgeshire at a place called the Hermitage, in the parish of Haddenham, near to Earith, where it formerly divided into two branches,—the one falling by Earith below Stretham Mere, where it received the river Grant from Cambridge, and passing to Ely, and thence to Prickwillow, where the Mildenhall river falls in, ran, united with that river, to Littleport Chayre, Welney, and Shrewsnest Point. The second branch, formerly called the West Water, ran in a

* Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. COWPER.

† See Map.

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northerly direction from Earith to Benwick, where it met a part of the Nene, and falling down with the Nene water, it again joined the first-mentioned branch at Shrewsnest Point,* and they then concurred in one course from thence by Upwell, Outwell, and Elm, (dividing the isle of Ely from Marshland) to Wisbech and Cross Keys Wash, which was at one time the only outfall for the waters of this great level, and so were carried to the sea.

The Nene, whose head is about Catesby, in Northamptonshire, running through Peterborough, there divided itself. The chief branch formerly passed by Standground and Horsey Bridge, to Whittlesea Mere, and through Ugg and Ramsey Meres, to Benwick above-named, and there joined the West Water (or second branch of the Ouse) from Earith. The united streams thence descended to a place called Great Cross, where they divided into two other branches, of which one, a minor branch, (called the Plant Water) took a further northerly direction by Guyhirn to Wisbech; and the other took a direct course from Great Cross, through March, to the said Shrewsnest Point, where it united itself to the first branch of the Ouse from Stretham, and thus took its course by Wisbech to the sea. The second principal branch of the Nene, after passing through Peterborough, ran by Thorney Bar and Singleholt, to

* One branch of the Ouse, in its present course, enters the county of Cambridge at the Hermitage, near Earith, runs down the Hundred-feet or New Bedford river, in a northerly direction, by Sutton, Mepal, and Manea, and enters Norfolk a little to the east of Welney. The other branch, after its junction with the Grant, passes by Ely, and receiving the waters of the Mildenhall river, proceeds to Denver sluice, where the two branches unite and continue their course by Downham, Stow, Magdalen, and St. German's, to Lynn, and thence to their outfall.

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Crowland, where it united with the Welland, and passed with it to Spalding, and so to the sea,

The Welland has its rise near Sibertoft, in Northamptonshire, and coming to Market Deeping, passed to Crowland, where it divided into two branches,—the one leading by South Eau to Clow's Cross, and so by Guyhirn towards Wisbech; the other in a more slow course to Spalding.

The course of these rivers shews that *at Wisbech* was anciently, and we may say originally, the *Grand Outfall* for all the vast aggregate body of waters brought down from the rivers Grant, Onse,* a considerable part of the Nene, and several minor streams, as was also the great estuary by which the tides flowed into and up the several above-mentioned rivers; at which time the haven of Lynn was but six poles wide,† serving only to discharge the water coming down the little Ouse or Brandon river, and the small rivers of Stoke, Setch, and Nar.

Causes leading to the Decay of the original Outfall at Wisbech, by the diversion of the Ouse Waters through a new Cut at Littleport Chayre, and the neglect of ancient Sewers.

Presuming that the inhabitants of the country, as it became more settled, followed the example originally

* The Ouse uttereth the great collected body of water it hath brought with it, out of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Essex, Hertford, Bedford, Buckingham, Oxford, and Northamptonshire, (ten counties) into the North Sea, after having made a course of 160 miles. Badeslade, p. 4.

† In former ages, the channel of Lenne haven (as by good records appeareth) was not above six poles wide. Badeslade, p. 1.

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set by the Romans, they would proceed to take in and embank increasing quantities of land towards the coast, whereby the high country waters would be kept from the sea, whither the descent of the country would have carried them, had there been no such obstructions. Notwithstanding these embankments, the grand outfall by Wisbech would, from the communication between the Nene and Ouse, for a long time continue good; but when the quantity of ebb left to return with the land waters diminished, and the outfalls began to decay, the more remote parts of the level would become inundated. The drains then contrived would divide the waters into different courses, and thus deprive the main rivers of their usual supply, which in consequence would gradually diminish in depth, and thus impede the flow of the tides up their channels. The waters remaining upon the land would not only deposit the sullage, but cover the surface with moor. Through these impediments, the upland waters would come down less rapidly, and the tides being restrained, and the quantity of ebb diminished, they would neither have strength enough to maintain one certain course in so large an outfall, nor sufficient force to scour out the sands, so as to preserve a sufficiently deep channel. Causes of this nature may have led, in some degree, to the decay of the ancient outfall at the port of Wisbech. But the great bane, and what completed the destruction of that noble outfall, was the diverting so large a portion of the waters of the great Ouse, * to the channel of

* The river Ouse, its outfall by Wisbech decaying, was not only cut straight, but by a new river made from Littleport Chayre to Rebeck, was let fall into Ouse Parva or Brandon Water, and thence by Salter's Lode to Lynn haven, its former course to Littleport being by Wellenhee or Welle, and so to the North Sea at Wisbech. Dug. p. 372.

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the little Ouse or Brandon river, *by making a new cut from Littleport, by Rebeck, and Priest's Houses, into the little Ouse, and so turning its course to Lynn instead of Wisbech.*

It is difficult to determine when this cut was made, though it seems to have been done at a very early period; * but the straightness of this part, so contrary to the usual course of the stream, plainly shews it to be artificial. † This cut, although it might relieve a certain part of the country, was unquestionably very fatal to the port of Wisbech, which, by the loss of so great a body of upland water, and so large a receptacle for the tides, must much sooner and more hastily fall into decay and ruin, and in time become insufficient even to pass off the waters of the Nene itself, by which means, those parts of the level bordering upon it would become inundated and drowned.

That the ancient outfall of the great Ouse was by Wisbech ‡ to the sea, is testified by the sea banks from Outwell to Wisbech, along the whole tract. A further testimony is, that when the Wisbech channel decayed, the people of Marshland, finding themselves overcharged by the waters, made complaint to king Edward the first, who granted a commission for restoring these "Waters of Upwell" (for so the Ouse which formerly passed that way was called) to the

* It was probably made in the time of Edward I;—about 1274.

† A record vouched by Mr. Hexham, surveyor to William, Earl of Arundel, shews that at some time there was no river between Littleport Chayre and Rebeck, or Priest's Houses. Badeslade.

‡ Badeslade, p. 6.

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outfall at Wisbech, "by their due and ancient course." And it was ordered, that there should be three dams made, one at Fendyke, about Upwell town's end, near Popham Lode sluice; another at Little Lode bridge, in Upwell; and the third at Outwell bridge, to stop the waters of the Nene and Welland from descending into the Ouse, and force them to the outfall at Wisbech again;* and whilst the great Ouse, before the artificial cut at Littleport Chayre, had its perfect outfall by Wisbech, the channel of Lynn, though not more than six poles wide, was stated, on presentment, to be both sufficient for the haven and vessels thither resorting, by the inlet of the salt water, and large enough to pass away the fresh.† A.D. 1378.

Although many attempts were made to recover this ancient outfall, and divers presentments for such purpose took place; nevertheless, by neglect and delay in putting such orders into execution, the waters could not get to the sea by Wisbech, but still continued to annoy the level.

* In an ancient MS. dedicated to Andrews, bishop of Ely, in 1618, an account is given by Mr. Atkins before-mentioned, of the original state and condition of Wisbech river, anno 1292.—"This was an arm of the sea, "and the time was when the whole course of the Ouse had its passage "by Welney and Well, to the North seas at Wisbech, and from thence "where now the washes be. In regard whereof, writers say king John's "people perished in the waters of Welle." And Thorney red book, speaking of Wisbech castle, says, "Super fluvium illud famosum, quod "Welle stream appellatur, situm est predictum castrum, quod a pluribus "paludibus et ripulis et fontibus principium habet, et per longos meatus, "in mare magnum juxta Wisbech, derivare liquido comprobatur." This arm had Holland and a part of the isle on one side, and Marshland, in Norfolk, on the other, which were defended from it by great sea banks. Thither of old resorted ships and vessels of great burden, but the sea forsaking the isle, made the whole passage between Wisbech and the washes high marshes and sands.

† Dugdale, p. 394.

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In later times, the banks (especially from Wisbech upwards) began to be built upon,* and thus the water courses were made too narrow. Also the drains, &c. within the fens, which were the principal conductors of the waters into the main streams, grew up for want of dyking and scouring, and thus became decayed; and the waters themselves were farther obstructed by wears and other impediments,† placed not only in the smaller drains, but in the main streams, to the general injury of the whole country.

Jurors presented not only these several obstructions, but the insufficiency of many of the sewers; and the outfall of the Nene was decreed to be dug and enlarged in places of default from Guyhirn to the sea.

Still no works were proceeded in, by reason that it became a doubtful question whether any good could be effected unless *the whole* of the decayed drains were all forthwith thoroughly cleansed; the country, therefore, were discouraged from attempting a work of so vast expense and uncertainty as to its real effect, the waters seeming at this time to fall naturally towards Lynn,—and thus the *great Ouse* became at length the receptacle for conveying the waters of the level to the sea through Lynn; and the drains and sewers which were first formed and contrived to convey the waters into the channel of the Ouse through Wisbech having now become neglected, the inhabitants of the district were induced to give them a new course to Lynn, by leading these waters by drains into the little Ouse or Brandon river.

* At the time of the general drainage, several houses were bought to be pulled down, in order to make the river at Wisbech wider, as appears by receipts for money paid by the Earl of Bedford, Lord Gorges, &c. Anno 1637. Badeslade, p. 17.

† Ibid. p. 73, 74.

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After the first embankments took place, proper drains and sewers were no doubt contrived to carry off the waters from the lands into the main channels. And as the property of most of the lands in the great level was in after times vested in the religious houses, the rulers and governors thereof shewed considerable anxiety in maintaining and improving their respective properties and interests. Several useful drains and sewers appear to have been formed by them, and great improvements made in particular quarters, but all without any reference to the general benefit of the level. Powerful individuals, pursuing private gain, executed measures destructive to extensive districts, and designs for the public good were obstructed through the separate interests of particular men and particular bodies of men, and whilst disputes relating to these rights and grants occurred between the different bodies of proprietors, the sewers and drains in the mean time continued to be neglected; it, therefore, became necessary to provide some remedy for the inconveniences thereby sustained; and with the view probably of obtaining a general relief, the waters of the great Ouse were turned into the channel of the little Ouse as before-mentioned. Thus the decay in the outfall at Wisbech, and the inundation of the level, appear to have been owing, not to any regular operation of nature, but to works of men thwarting and obstructing nature, which in a regular course was continually advancing the good of the level and the improvement of the rivers and outfalls; and as long as such rivers and outfalls were preserved deep and good, the level was maintained in a fruitful condition for a succession of ages. Hence we find Leland * and other ancient writers very lavish

* Deservedly named the Father of Antiquaries; he lived about 1530.

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in their praises of this once fruitful country. Paradoxical, therefore, as it may seem, still it appears that the overflowing and stagnation of waters have been occasioned by improvident and partial embanking, and by not putting the laws of sewers afterwards in execution; by neglect whereof, the principal drains became useless to convey the downfall waters into the rivers, and thereby those rivers themselves were by degrees lost.* In confirmation of which effects, Dugdale remarks, † "That it had been a long received opinion, "that the total draining of the great level had, for the "most part, been occasioned by neglect of putting the "laws of sewers in due execution in latter times." Mr. Atkins before-mentioned, speaking of Wisbech, says, "This pitiful outfall proceedeth of neglect in not "scouring and dyking the river, nor preserving and "maintaining the petty sewers and drains which anciently fed the same, by enforcing the waters thereof, "and keeping them in their proper course, whereby the "sea, finding but little resistance, nor strength of a following head of water to scour the channel continually, "silted up the river and outfall, so that though of ancient "time ships of great burden resorted to Wisbech, yet "for these causes the outfall so silted up, that as long "since as king John's time ‡ the channel was so shallow "that people could pass over at low water." §

The Effect of the New Cut at Littleport Chayre.

This new cut soon caused the *Wisbech* outfall to decay, and Lynn haven to be worn wider by the action of the tides, and the force of the fresh waters descending

* Badeslade. † Dug. p. 375. ‡ Badeslade, p. 17. § A.D. 1200.

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that way; for when the Ouse had this new passage given it to the sea, the river Nene led its waters also the same way from Peterborough by Standground to Benwick, and thence to a decayed river in March, called Great Cross, and to Shrewsnest Point, in Upwell, and there the said river divided itself, into two branches, one whereof descended by Welney, and from thence into this new cut, and by that course to the sea, through Lynn haven. Thus the waters of the Nene were also forced to take, in a manner, their full flow and whole course, contrary to their usual avoidance at Wisbech,* by reason of the decay of the sewers.

The Ouse having this new course and outfall given to it, the waters appeared to go off the level much better than before, but still that channel could not receive all the streams which wanted to descend by it, and, therefore, the waters of the Nene, as well as of the Ouse, still overflowed the level in winter; and the same in times of flood, because all the ancient sewers were made to drain into Wisbech river; from whence arose A.D. those complaints to king Edward the first, to restore 1292. the waters "to their ancient course;" and although orders were made for cleansing the old drains, and conveying the waters from off the level to Wisbech, still they were either neglected, or failed of any beneficial result. It is true that on a flat shore, like that of this country, the deposit of silth must always obstruct the discharge of the land floods, and render the assistance of art necessary, when such means are judiciously applied; but the face of the fen country in general affords legible and abundant proofs of the partiality and inefficacy of former works, and that whilst laws were

* Badeslade, p. 18.

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made to drain one district, others were ultimately injured, and one error was attempted to be remedied by committing another.

Several commissions from the crown were at various times issued, and courts of sewers holden in divers parts of the isle and adjoining counties, to consider of proper methods for the draining of the country, and the public attention was not unfrequently called to the neglected state of the rivers and drains leading to the outfall, as is shewn by the following

*Ancient Proceedings of Commissioners of Sewers.**

A.D.

1253. In 38th Henry III.† the king, on occasion of a breach of the sea banks, directed his precept to the sheriff of the county, requiring him to distrain all those who had lands within the precincts of the old banks about Wisbech, and to repair such banks as they ought to do according to their holdings.

1314. In 8th Edward II. Geoffry de Colvile‡ and others were appointed to view the banks and sewers in Newton, Wisbech, &c. then in decay, and take order for repair.

1335. In 10th Edward III. John de Colvile and others were appointed to inquire touching the decay in the sea

* Commissions of sewers were held by the authority of the common law, or ancient usage of the kingdom. The first statute passed on the subject was 6th Henry VI. 1427, which added to the power of Commissioners, and gave them authority to make officers, and to take account of expenditures, &c.

† Dugdale, p. 299.

‡ See family of Colvile, under the title of "Newton," in the account of the adjoining parishes.

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banks and sewers in the parts about Wisbech, Tid Saint Giles, Elm, Leverington, and Newton, and to take speedy order for their repair.

A.D.

In 13th Edward III. a session of sewers was held at Wisbech, when certain commissioners were assigned to view the banks and sewers, who ordained several banks to be repaired and sewers scoured. 1338.

In the 47th of the same king's reign, certain justices of sewers sat at Elm, when it was presented that a certain bank anciently made for safeguard of the lands betwixt the river of Wisbech and the river of Welle, beginning at the footpath opposite to the gate of Wisbech castle, and so extending itself to Goneldich, thence to Charitie cross, and so to the river of Welle, was in decay; and it was ordained that the bank should be raised three feet higher, so that the height from the level ground should be seven feet, and thirty-two feet in thickness at bottom, and at top twelve feet. It was likewise ordered that each man having lands or tenements in Elme, Wisbech, and Welle, should take his portion upon the sea bank, beginning at the house of Thomas Mounpesson, and extending to the flood-gates at Elm, and so to Welle; for default wherein, the said Thomas Mounpesson was afterwards attached.* 1372.

* Dugdale, p. 313. It is ascertained that the house of Thomas Mounpesson is the house at the bottom of Timber Market, now the property of Mrs. Elizabeth Fawsett, — in which house Thomas Fawsett, Esq. Major in the Cambridgeshire militia, was born. The mention of this name excites in my breast such feelings of regard, that I trust I shall be pardoned for paying a small tribute of respect to a character so deserving. He is universally respected by all who know him, as a man of honor, integrity, and benevolence of heart, as well as distinguished for

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A.D. 1380. In 4th Richard II. at a session of sewers held at Elm, it was ordained, that for the better safeguard of the bank of Elm and Welle, every man having his portion thereon should plant willows opposite thereto, to break off the force of the waters in flood times, and no one should permit their swine to go upon the banks, except they were ringed, upon a penalty of one penny each hog.

1437. In 16th Henry VI. a court was held at Wisbech by Sir John Colvile, Gilbert Haltoft, and others, at which various presentments were made, and an order issued for repairing the banks and cleansing the sewers, and it was directed, that the tenants of forty acres of land in Beechcroft, in Wisbech, should maintain a certain bank in Wisbech, called Wisbech Fen Dyke, and that the whole hundred of Wisbech should cleanse the sewer of South Eau Dyke, which lies in the parish of Wisbech, to Trokenholt, in Leverington; and the abbott of Thorney from thence to Clow's Cross, and the hundred from Clow's Cross to Guyhirn; and the town of Elm should cleanse the river leading from Elm to Wisbech, so that the fresh water might run in the channel unto Wisbech, and thence to sea. The tenants of lands called Pavy's, in March, were ordered to cleanse the same, so that the water might have its

urbanity of manners. Though possessed of an ample independent fortune, he was desirous of rendering himself useful to his country, and, thereupon, entered into the militia of his county, in which he served with honor from the commencement of the revolutionary war to its termination in 1815, and whereof he became and is now Major. Few men are more amiable in their public and private character. He now enjoys the *otium cum dignitate* at Townley Castle, Ramsgate, where he is equally respected. If any thing can add to the character of this amiable man, it is the modesty with which he will read this tribute to his virtues.

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passage to the great river of Wisbeche. They also presented, that the prior of Ely and Sir Thomas Tuddenham should repair one crest,* beginning at the Fen Dyke, in Wisbeche, and leading to Bellymill Bridge; and that the parson of the church of Wisbeche ought and had used to repair a sewer, beginning at the house of Reginald Rogers, in Wisbeche, and leading into the town. Also, John Everard, Esq. was presented for having straitened the common river of Wisbeche with nets and other engines. The landholders in *the Old Market of Wisbeche* were ordered to make a new sea bank from Beuvise Cross to the great bridge of Wisbeche, on the west part of the river. The landholders of the town end of Wisbeche, on the north side of the river *Use*, were ordered to repair a bank from the great bridge in Wisbeche unto Sozeldyke; and the landholders in the fen end of Wisbeche, from Sozeldyke to Guyhirn, and from thence to Piggs Drove Cross; and they said that the landholders of Guyhirn Cross, in Wisbeche, should repair a crest of bank, in height four, and in breadth eight feet, from the Cross to Sozeldyke; and for the better safeguard of the town of Wisbeche, they ordained that the bank called Wisbeche Fen Dyke should be barred, to prevent cattle passing thereon, and all dams and engines in the river, whereby the water was stopped, should be removed, from Guyhirn to the sea; and a guardian was appointed to oversee and to open and shut the four gotes of Wisbeche, Leverington, Newton, and Tyd Saint Giles, and all the sewers in every hamlet were directed to be well scoured. The great river of Wisbeche was also ordered to be scoured and enlarged in all places where defective, from Guyhirn to the sea, by the landholders within the hundred of Wisbeche. It was also ordained,

* A range of bank. Dug. p. 318.

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that the water of Old Field, in Elm, ought to have its course and issue by a pipe lying under the river of Elm, and thence to run into Wisbeche river at Bevyse; but as the river had for many years past been so filled up with silth and sand brought in by the sea tides, that it could have no passage there, the water was directed
A.D. to be sent by another pipe unto the flood-gate in
1469. Leverington, called Dieugard. About thirty years after, a commission was appointed, consisting of the bishop of Ely, George, duke of Clarence, with several of the nobility, and Henry Spilman, and others, to view the banks and sewers, and the water passing from the bridge at Erith, by Benwick, Great Cross, and Wysbeche, to the sea, and to make ordinances for the repair of the banks, &c.

1480. At this time, Bishop Morton cut that direct channel from Standground to Guyhirn, — a work declared by Dugdale as of singular consequence, not only for the quicker evacuation of the overflowings of the Nene, but for conveniency of carriage from Peterborough to Wisbech, affording a lasting memorial to that worthy Bishop.*

1547. In 2d Edward VI. a session of sewers was held at Upwell, by Geoffry Colvile, Edmund Beaupré, and Richard Everard, Esquires, and others, when it was presented, that by the great abundance of fresh waters yearly descending from the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, Bedford, Huntingdon, Northampton, Rutland, and Lincoln, by and through two great rivers, — one called the Ouse, descending unto the north seas at King's Lynne, and the other called the Great Ee, extending

* Dugdale, p. 363.

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from Peterborough, by Ramsey, to March, and thence to a place in Upwell, called Shrewsnest Point, and so to Lynne:—there were yearly drowned within Upwell and Outwell 8,000 acres of ground, besides damage to the houses of the inhabitants, to the number of three hundred households, specially by the said waters descending by the said great *Ee* to Lynne; the water of which said great Ee used to be conveyed unto the north sea at Wisbeche, by the decayed river in March, called Great Cross, Creak Lode, and the new leam; the decay of which sewers, with the rivers and drains extending unto Wisbeche, they considered to be the chief reason of the drowning, as well of the pastures of Upwell and Outwell, as of the whole country of Marshland, and would utterly drown the said parishes, unless the same decayed sewers were scoured, and the waters conveyed to sea by Wisbeche, in manner afore time used. And they said, another great occasion of drowning the marsh ground was by reason of the decay of an old sewer in Upwell, called Maid Lode,* which sewer had been most specially decayed on account of not keeping a good sluice of stone-work or timber, with sufficient falling and hanging doors to stop out the flood silty waters; and also by reason that the same sewer did not fall lower towards the north seas, viz. at and against a place in Denver, called Denver Hythe, at which place they thought it most meet for to set up and build the said sluice; and that, for the preservation of the said sluice, there ought to be a substantial clouse of stone-work and timber, with two sufficient draw doors to the

* A certain river in Outwell, called the Little Lode, is said to divide the counties of Norfolk and Cambridge. Dugdale, p. 337.

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same, to be set within half a furlong of the said sluice, to stop the fresh waters in the time of extreme drought.*

A.D. 1571. In 13th Elizabeth, another session of sewers was held, when it was presented, that the sea bank, beginning at Tyd Gote, leading to the Horse-shoe, was in great decay, and should be made twenty feet high above the salt marsh, and six broad, by the inhabitants of Tyd, Newton, and Leverington; and from the Horse-shoe to Crabbe Marsh Gate, should be made of the same breadth and height, by all the lands in Eastfield, and thence to the sluice of Wisbeche; which bank from Crabbe Marsh Gate was decayed in bishop Gooderick's time, and part thereof *carried, by the consent of the said bishop, for the pavement of the market-place in Wisbeche, and part by Mr. William Blomfield, for making of a wind-mill there.*† The like reparation was ordered to be made at the bank called Whymey Dyke, beginning at the sea bank end at the Horse-shoe, in Leverington, unto Core Corner, in Wisbeche; and from Core Corner to the old market and to Bevis Hall, twelve feet in height and sixteen in breadth, by all the landholders on the north of Wisbeche. It was also presented, that the landholders in Whitemathes, from Barton Cross, alias Barton Lane, ought to make a drove,‡ called Giggs Drove, four feet in height and eight in breadth; and that the great river of Wisbeche being greatly decayed, raised, and silted up, by reason of the flowing and ebbing of the salt water, it was ordered that a sluice should be made in the said river, at the Horse-shoe, in Leverington; and as it was for the preservation, so it should be at the charge of

* Dug. p. 332. † Ibid. p. 338.

‡ Raised causeways were formerly called droves.

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all the hundred of Wisbeche; and the river should be made in breadth sixty feet and in depth ten feet, from Guyhirn to the sea; and that there should be two new rivers cast on each side of the said great river of Wisbeche; the one to begin at Guyhirn Cross, and extend to Kentoun's Corner; the other at Tower house, and to extend unto Keky's mill: which rivers were to be fifteen feet wide a-piece, and six deep; and a dam was to be made on the lode at Hobb's house, so that by the stopping thereof in dry years, the water might the better descend into the great river.

At a session of sewers, 23d Elizabeth, before John Peyton,* Thomas Hewar, Esquires, and others, it was decreed, that Wisbeche, from Stone Cross (otherwise called Spittal Cross) to the sluice, should make and maintain the sea bank, and that the township of Elm should dig and scour the flood-gates in Elm to Spittal Cross. And that whereas the great river of Wisbeche was ordered to be digged, for the better grinding of the channel low to sea, so ought also Elm Ee. And they ordered that the latter should be scoured from Wisbeche sluice to Spittal Cross, (being the division between Elm and Wisbech) by the township of Wisbeche; and from Spittal Cross to the flood-gates of Elm, by the township of Elm; and from the town bridge of Elm to Friday-brigge, by the queen's majesty, for her lands belonging to the dissolved monastery of Crowland, to be four feet deeper, and to hold twenty feet in breadth. A.D. 1581.

At a session of sewers held at Wisbech, Sir John Peyton, John Colvile, John Repps, Thomas Hewar, 1589.

* For the history of this ancient and honourable family, see title "Emneth," amongst the adjoining villages.

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Charles Balam, and others, gave their approbation to certain new sewers in Elm and Welle, which were found to be most beneficial, and thereupon order was made for continuance thereof.

A. D. 1596. A session of sewers was held by Edmund Bell, Thomas Hewar, Alexander Balam, Esquires, and others, concerning the course of Welney and Welle streams, and other sewers, when it was ordained that those streams, from Littleport Chayre to Well Ee, and so towards Elm, (as the same had been accustomed) and also March stream unto Shrewsnest, as well as the waters of South Ee, anciently called the Old Ee, from Clow's Cross into Guyhirn, should be all forthwith cleansed and scoured.

1608. Also, 6th James I. at a session of sewers then held, a strong and sufficient sluice of stone and brick was ordered to be set up at the Horse-shoe * below Wisbech. This sluice did not stand seven days, but was blown up by the tides.† Nevertheless, it was agreed, that after the river was again cleansed to a sufficient depth, there should be a new sluice erected, if need required.

1616. At a further session of sewers, held 15th James I. before Francis, lord Russel, and others, the following decree was made: That the great river of Wisbech, from the sea to Wisbech bridge, thence to the Mouth, and so to Guyhirn Cross, should be cleansed to the ancient breadth and old bottom, and that Morton's Leam should be scoured from Guyhirn Cross upwards.

* Dugdale, p. 399.

† Ibid. p. 400. The erecting this sluice is afterwards said to have given occasion to the decay of Wisbech river.

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Also, about twenty years after, when this order for deepening Wisbech river was carried into effect, the workmen, as before observed, at eight feet below the then bottom, came to another bottom, which was stony, and found in it boats which had been overwhelmed with silth for many ages. Various other presentments have been made at divers periods, but these are introduced to shew the increasing progressive interest of the public, and of the inhabitants, towards the improvement of the country and the outfall of its waters.* A.D. 1636.

The Alteration in the Course of the Nene, by Bishop Morton's new Leam, and the subsequent Cut now called Smith's Leam, leading the Waters by Guyhirn through Wisbech.

When the ancient outfall of the Nene by Spalding and Wisbech became defective, the waters of that river were found to annoy the body of the isle of Ely by being forced to take their passage, some by Standground, and some by Horsey Bridge, into Whittlesey Mere, thence into Ramsey Mere, and so round about; part thereof falling at Great Cross, by a drain called Plant Water, to Guyhirn, and proceeding thence to Wisbech; whilst other part took a course below March, to Elm Leam, where it again divided; one branch taking the course to Wisbech, and the other by Shrewsnest Point and

* Many other ancient orders and presentments, made by commissioners of sewers, are collected in a book now deposited and kept by the Capital Burgesses of Wisbech, amongst their other writings and records. These documents appear generally to relate to the removing of obstructions and annoyances in the great river, the support and reparation of the banks, the scouring out of Elm river, the making of a bank round Waldersea and Coldham, and also the scouring out of Wisbech south side drain.

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Outwell, through Well creek, to Salter's Lode, into the Ouse,—still overflowing the isle in their way.* Therefore, Morton, then Bishop of Ely,* in order to prevent so large a portion of the waters of the Nene from passing into the isle of Ely by Standground; and for the more speedy conveyance thereof from out of the said isle, as well as more effectually to recover the outfall at Wisbech; made a straight cut, or new river, forty feet wide and about twelve miles long, beginning at the high grounds within a short distance of Peterborough, and continuing the same in a direct line from thence to Guyhirn. The relief afforded by this work was ineffectual, on account of its being cut shallow, and affording but little earth for banks; and after some time, several gravels being laid into it for the convenience of carting and riding across, and other impediments obstructing the free course of the water, the levels still continued to suffer much injury, and the watercourse thus effected was subsequently abandoned,† as will be shewn in the History of the North Level.

* Bishop Morton was a man of great abilities, firmly attached to the interests of Edward IV. and negociated the marriage between Henry, earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII. and Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Edward IV. and thus provided for the future tranquillity of the kingdom, by making a coalition of the divided houses. In 1487, he was made Lord High Chancellor of England.

† See p. 21, where the ancient course of the Nene is stated to have taken a direction from Great Cross, by Guyhirn, to Wisbech. About the place where the cut met the river at Guyhirn, Bishop Morton built a tower of brick, that he might see his workmen afar off in the level, and give such directions as were requisite. This cut or drain was known by the name of the New Leam. Badeslade, p. 113, 114.

Bishop Morton is said also to have continued the same cut through Wisbech, for the more speedy delivery of the waters, and attempted to cut through the sea dyke, Wysebeche, at Bevy's Cross, and again at East-field end, nigh the Horse-shoe, in Leverington, which banks were, in less

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Application for a General Drainage of the Level.

The preceding remarks will shew that attempts at improving and draining the great level were made as early as the reign of Edward I. (1292.) In 1438, Gilbert Haltoft,* one of the barons of the exchequer, having procured a commission for draining the country, proceeded in making laws for all the dams, &c. in the river of Wisbech, to be taken up from Guyhirn to the sea; and other plans for improvement were from time to time tried with varied success. Divers representations too had been made to government for the purpose of granting commissions for cleaning the outfalls to lead the waters to sea; but the reign of Elizabeth (as observed by Mr. Gough) may be properly fixed on as the period "when the great level began to become a public care;" for in the 43d year of her majesty's reign, an act of parliament was passed, intituled, "An Act for "recovering many hundred thousand Acres of Marshes "and other Grounds, subject commonly to surrounding, "within the Isle of Ely, and the Counties of Cambridge, "Huntingdon, Northampton, &c." No proceedings,

than thirty years before, ordained by commissioners to be maintained, i. e. from the first slope of the bank fifty feet;—and so made a new outfall from Wisbech to the four Gowts, and thence to the sea. Dug. p. 373.

The river of Wisbeche, a little above the great bridge, within the memory of man, running crooked, was cut straight, and so to this day continueth. Ibid.

The works done by Bishop Morton are said for a time to have caused improvements, and that the current and fall of the water at Wisbech was so great, that no man would adventure under the bridge with a boat but by veering through. Cole.

* Baron Haltoft had a manor and property at Outwell, in the time of Henry VI.

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however, appear to have been entered upon in pursuance of this act, and it is not improbable that the scheme was frustrated by the death of the queen, which happened within two years afterwards. Sir John Popham, Lord Chief Justice of England, next followed; he procured an act of parliament for making new drains and a new river,* which was begun in 1605, but Sir John dying, it was stopped up on account of the insufficiency of the banks. Four years afterwards, it was renewed and cut two feet deeper, for the benefit of most part of the isle of Ely, and specially for the hundred of Wisbech; but this new river being also stopped, the country lay in its former state, and on the death of Sir John, this whole project was abandoned.

Notwithstanding these disappointments, the drainage of a certain part of the level on the south side of Wisbech, called Waldersey, was attempted by Francis Tindall, Esq. and others, and carried into effect by an act of parliament obtained 4th James I. c. 13, intituled, "An Act for draining of certain Fens and low Grounds "of the Isle of Ely, subject to hurt by surrounding, "containing about 6,000 Acres, compassed about with "certain Banks, called and named the Ring of Wal-"dersey and Coldham." Thus the small district of Waldersey may be said to have taken the lead in the great work of drainage, under parliamentary authority. The provisions of that act are the basis upon which all public proceedings of the proprietors are grounded to this day, and the drainage of that portion is still

* Badeslade, p. 24, 25. From March river, to fall into Well creek, and from thence to Salter's-lode, the river was to have been eighty feet wide and eight feet deep.

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preserved distinct, and unconnected with the other parts of the level.* The adventurers received as a recompence two-thirds of the whole of the lands drowned.

The persons, who next attempted to proceed with the important undertaking of the drainage of the level, were the earl of Arundel, Sir William Ayloffe, Baronet, and Anthony Thomas, Esq.† but their proposals not being agreeable to those who acted as commissioners on behalf of the proprietors, king James the first himself resolved to become adventurer, and declared by his letters patent that he himself would undertake it, on condition of receiving 120,000 acres as a remuneration.‡ The king's political embarrassments, however, prevented any steps being taken for carrying this measure into actual execution.

In the 6th year of king Charles I. Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, born and educated in Holland, contracted for the draining of the level, and was to have for his recompence 95,000 acres. The country, however, considering Sir Cornelius as a foreigner, shewed great aversion to him, and thwarted his plans very much; and at length suit was made to Francis, earl of Bedford, a nobleman of high birth and rank, and endowed with great and amiable qualities, as well as active in all matters that tended to the public good, who was ear-

* Dugdale, p. 367.

† Ibid. p. 401. In his History of Embankment is a map representing the great level as it lay drowned—meaning as it lay drowned before the general undertaking; "whereof," he observes, "we have in our times "been eye witnesses." p. 375.

‡ Ibid. p. 408.

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nestly solicited to undertake the work of drainage, to which the said earl, actuated by principles of public spirit, gave his consent, and associated other adventurers with himself. The contract made with the country was, that the earl and his co-adventurers were to receive from the proprietors a third part of the whole, or 95,000 acres, to be set out in several parts of the level, together with the ways, passages, forelands, new rivers, cuts, drains, and fishings of the same, to be made by them, and which were vested in the said earl and his participants. 55,000 acres were adjudged to the earl and the other adventurers, subject to no incumbrance; and the residue, about 40,000 acres, were to remain as a fund, from the annual profits of which the works of drainage were to be maintained and continued. This agreement was confirmed by a commission of sewers, at which were present, Sir John Bevill, Knight, of Chesterton, Sir John Peyton,
A.D. Sir John Bell, and others, to the number of forty, held
1630. at Lynn 13th January, (6th Charles I.) and thence called "The Lynn Law;" and by an indenture, afterwards signed by Francis, earl of Bedford, and others, on
1631. the 27th February, (7th Charles I.)* the terms of such agreement are particularized.

Undertaking by Francis, Earl of Bedford.

1634. In the 10th year of the reign of king Charles I. a charter of incorporation was granted, with certain privileges to the earl, and thirteen other persons, adventurers and participants with him, among whom were Oliver, earl of Bolingbroke, lord Gorges, Sir

* See Cole's Bedford Level Laws.

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Robert Bevill, &c. They cut 83,000 acres of the land into twenty lots or shares, containing 4,000 acres in a lot, as equal in value as could be then well judged, (the remaining 3,000 acres lying overplus); and proceeded therein to the expenditure of about £100,000.* and at a session of sewers held on the 12th October, (13th Charles I.) the commissioners decreed the level to be drained according to the intent of "the Lynn law." However, at a commission of sewers at Huntingdon, held on 12th April following, the work was declared to be incomplete,† and his majesty Charles I. thereupon undertook the better draining thereof, but was to have an addition of 57,000 acres, on the levels' being made good winter ground. The king went on with the undertaking until his unhappy wars and difficulties took place,‡ which, preventing any further progress in the works, they fell into decay, and so continued for several years, and the country having received no benefit by the draining, entered upon the 95,000 acres again, and no

A.D. 1637. 1638.

* The works made were the old Bedford river, Sam's cut from Feltwell to Ouse, a cut to drain Mildenhall river in Burnt Fen, and Bevil's Leam from Whittlesey Mere to Guyhirn; they likewise made a great sluice at Well creek end, to keep the tides out of the river. † Badeslade.

‡ It was his majesty's intention also to have built a town in the midst of the level, at Manea, and to have called it Charlemont, the design whereof he drew himself; and he caused a bank on the south side of Morton's Leam, extending from Peterborough to Wisbech, to be made, and began a like bank on the north side; he also caused a new river to be cut between the stone sluice at the Horse-shoe and the sea below Wisbech, of sixty feet in breadth, and about two miles and a half in length, with banks on both sides thereof, and placed a sluice in the marshes below Tid, upon the outfall of Shire Drain, which afterwards was swallowed up by the quick sands. Dug. p. 414. On the side of the channel below Gunthorpe, the compiler of this work saw, in 1822, the top of a sluice, which, by its inclined situation, seemed to have been undermined, and most probably is the sluice here mentioned to have been placed by king Charles the first.

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more works were done until after the death of the king, and also of the said Francis, earl of Bedford.

A.D. 1649. At length, in the year 1649, William, earl of Bedford, his heir and successor, and his participants, renewed the undertaking on the terms of the Lynn law, except that instead of 40,000 acres allotted as a fund for the continuance of the work of draining, the whole 95,000 acres were to be taxed for that purpose; and an application being made to the assembly at Westminster, then called the Parliament, for their sanction, an act, since called the "Pretended Act of Parliament," was passed in the year 1649, to promote the undertaking; upon which, the earl proceeded so far therein, as to perfect the same at the further charge of about £300,000.* though to the ruin of many adventurers; and having accomplished the whole work within the compass of five years, the said level was, by a decree of sewers on the 1653. 25th of March in the year 1653, adjudged to be fully drained. Whereupon the said earl and his participants had possession of those 95,000 acres awarded to them, and from the time that the land in the said great level was adjudged to the adventurers, the said 95,000 acres, liable to a perpetual tax for draining, have been known by the name of Adventurers' Lands, and the remainder, not being liable to be taxed for general works, have been called Free Lands.

* The expense of this work was enormous to the noble family of the Bedfords, for in order to raise money for carrying it on, they sold many manors in Devonshire, and many houses and lands in the parish of Saint Martin in the Fields, reserving only out of part thereof small fee-farm rents, prior to the time of Saint Paul's, Covent Garden, being made a parish, which was then part of Saint Martin's in the Fields. *An Inquiry into Facts*, 1775. p. 35.

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Act of 15th Charles II. for constituting a Corporation to settle the Drainage of the Great Level.

By the restoration of king Charles the second to the crown, the acts of the convention parliament became invalid; but for the better encouraging of the said earl and his participants in so great a work, and to form a system of laws for the due government thereof, an act was obtained in the 15th year of king Charles II. entitled, "An Act for settling the Draining of the "Great Level of the Fens called Bedford Level." A.D. 1662.

By this act, under which the Bedford level laws are now administered, the boundaries of the level are declared, and a corporation is constituted for governing the level, by the name of the "Governor, Bailiffs, and "Commonalty of the Company of Conservators of the "Great Level of the Fens;" which corporation consists of one governor, six bailiffs, twenty conservators and commonalty, who are empowered to use a common seal, and to purchase lands not exceeding £200. per annum, and goods and chattels, and to dispose thereof in the name and to the use of the corporation; and to assemble and meet together when, where, and as often as they please; and to appoint a register, receiver, one or more serjeants at mace, and other officers, and allow them salaries, and remove them and make new at their pleasure: and 83,000 acres, over and above 10,000 acres assigned to his majesty, and 2,000 acres to other grantees, (making together the said 95,000 acres) are vested in the said corporation, with the ways, passages, new rivers, cuts, drains, banks, and forelands made by Francis and William, earls of Bedford, and their participants, in trust for the earls of Bedford and their

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participants, according to such parts and proportions as they held and enjoyed at the time of passing the act, to be held of the king of the manor of East Greenwich, by fealty only, in free and common socage, and not otherwise; and the said 10,000 acres are vested in his majesty accordingly.

The governor, bailiffs, and conservators, or any five or more of them, (whereof the said governor or bailiffs, or any of them, to be two) are empowered to act in all cases as commissioners of sewers within the said level, or of the works made without, and to exercise such laws as are used in Romney Marsh, and may lay taxes on the 95,000 acres only, for support, maintenance, and preservation of the said level, and levy the same, with penalties for non-payment, not exceeding the third part of the tax; and do all other things in order to the support, maintenance, and preservation of the said great level, and works made and to be made within or without the said level, for carrying the waters of the level to its outfall, as they in their judgment think best. And no other commissioners of sewers are to intermeddle in the said level, or with the works thereunto belonging out of the said level.

All conveyances of the 95,000 acres are to be entered with the register, and no lease, grant, or conveyance of, or charge out of or upon the said 95,000 acres, or any part thereof, except leases for seven years in possession, shall be of force, but from the time they shall be entered with the register.

And the said governor, bailiffs, conservators, and commonalty, upon Wednesday in Whitsun week yearly,

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at a public meeting to be then held of the said corporation, by the greater number then present, (whereof the said governor or one of the bailiffs is to be one) are to elect the governor, bailiffs, and conservators respectively for the year ensuing; provided that none be capable to be or continue governor or bailiff that hath not 400 acres or more of the said 95,000 acres; nor to be a conservator that hath not 200 acres or more of the said 95,000 acres; nor any of the commonalty to have a voice in elections that hath not 100 acres or more of the said 95,000 acres. And the said governor, bailiffs, conservators, and officers are (before they proceed to act) to take an oath, "well and truly to execute the "office." And the said governor, bailiffs, conservators, and commonalty are the corporation for taking the accounts of their officers; and if any suit be commenced against the said corporation or any person, for any matter or thing done in pursuance of the last-mentioned act of king Charles, then he or they may plead the general issue, and give the special matter in evidence upon any trial to be had touching the same.

By the same act it is declared, that if any breaches happen in any of the banks, sluices, &c. or other works of drainage in or out of the said level, for the carrying of the waters of the said level to their outfalls, by reason of some inevitable accident, that the same are to be repaired by the said corporation in convenient time, but no other charge to be laid on the said corporation; nor to give any recompense for any loss or damage, which hath or shall happen by reason of their making such necessary and sufficient banks, for defending the said level from being overflowed, and for leading the waters

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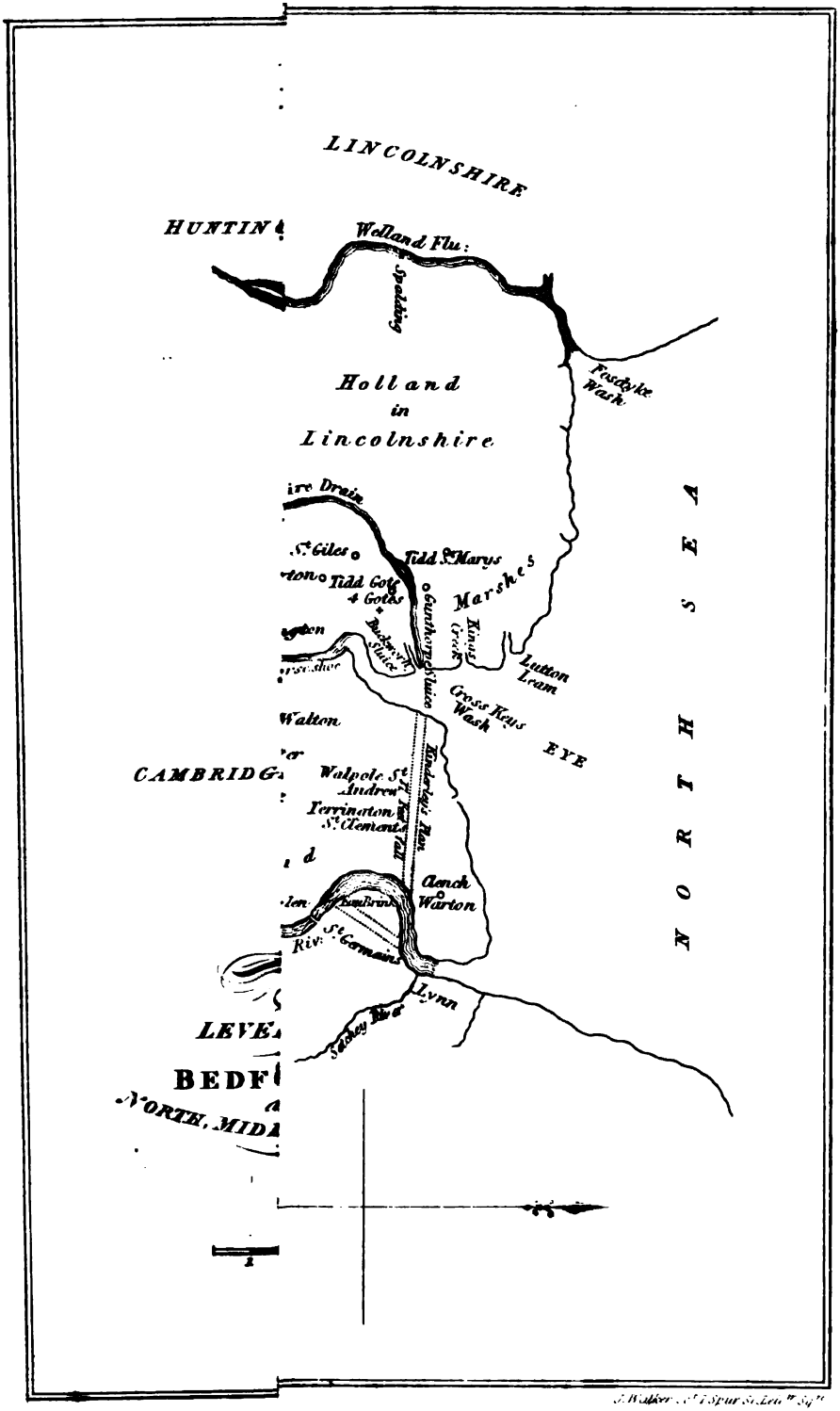
of the level into their channels; and it is declared, that the drainage and future maintenance of the great level ought to be without prejudice to navigation.

Of the 83,000 acres, part of the 95,000 acres which were at the first undertaking cut into lots, every adventurer then had his share in that division of good and bad land, and all lands were taxed alike per acre; but afterwards, being divided into divers hands, as people became purchasers of good or bad, the bad land alone would not bear the burthen of the tax; for there being much difference in the soil of the said lands, and some parts much more subject to overflowing than others, and not capable of being so well drained, therefore, by another act, (20th Charles II.) the 95,000 acres were for the future to be rated by way of a gradual acre tax, of eleven sorts or degrees of land, as are particularly mentioned in the lots, except the 12,000 acres, which are rated at the medium of such tax. And the serjeant at mace of the great level, by precepts under the seal of the corporation, in the nature of a writ of *habere facias possessionem* at common law, is to deliver possession to such purchaser as shall purchase for non-payment of taxes any part of the said 95,000 acres. By this act it is directed at what time the taxes shall be set, which are to be on the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, or one of them, after the first Sunday in April in every year,* and to sell lands for non-payment of taxes on

* From the alteration in the stile, by the act 24th Geo. II. 1751, the April meeting is to be holden eleven days later; — therefore, take the first eleven days out of April, and look for the first Sunday after the eleventh day, and the Wednesday after that Sunday will be the first day of the April meeting.

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the like days, or some or one of them. Several other powers and authorities are granted to the said corporation by the aforesaid acts, as by reference thereto will appear.

The undertakers for the general drainage of the fens thereupon commenced several important works, and in 1651 began the new Bedford river, and then proceeded to erect sluices in the Ouse, one at the Hermitage, and one at Denver; which latter sluice, being built in 1652, was undermined and destroyed in 1713, and again set down in 1749.*

The Division of the Great Level into three Districts.

At a court of the corporation of the Bedford level, held on 10th March, 1697, it was declared that the great level should be divided into three districts, distinguished by the several names of

MIDDLE LEVEL
SOUTH LEVEL
NORTH LEVEL.

* In consequence of building Denver sluice, St. John's Eau was cut in 1653, and Tong's drain in 1667. When the adventurers cut the hundred-feet river, and fixed the sluice at Hermitage, they also erected one at Denver for the preservation of the south level;—the Lynn merchants complained of the bad effects of this sluice on the harbour. A petition was presented to parliament to take away Denver sluice, and after the question had been long agitated, a bill was at length, in the 8th of king William, brought into parliament, where it was thoroughly discussed. Counsel were heard at the bar, many witnesses examined, much time spent in inquiry, and at length the intended bill for removing Denver sluice was rejected by a great majority.

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The north level is declared to be that part which lies on the north side of Morton's Leam, and the south side of the river Welland.

The middle level, that part which lies between Morton's Leam and the north bank of the old Bedford river.

And the south level is from the south bank of the old Bedford river, to Stoke, Feltwell, Mildenhall, and the upland country thereto adjoining.

These lands are rated by way of a gradual acre tax, of eleven sorts or degrees, as before stated, from seven pence to six shillings and fivepence per acre. The yearly tax exceeds £8,000. and supposing it to be £8,368. 8*s*. 8*d*. to be raised in the year, the middle and south levels would be charged with £7,634. 3*s*. 2¼*d*. and the north level only with £734. 5*s*. 5¼*d*. by reason that the taxes, which would otherwise have been chargeable thereon, have been purchased off by his grace the duke of Bedford.*

* In the year 1783, an act was passed called "The Turf Act," intituled, "An Act to enable the Corporation of the Governor, Bailiffs, "and Commonalty of the Company of Conservators of the Great Level of "the Fens, to sell their Taxes of certain Lands within the Middle and "South Levels, part of the said Great Level, which have been or may be "dug for Turf, and to apply the Money arising from such Sale, in dis-"charging the Bond Debts of the said Corporation on account of those "Levels." By this act, the corporation are empowered to sell the taxes wherewith such parts of the said 95,000 acres within the Middle and South Levels as had been or might be cut for turf, were then chargeable, and the money arising by such sale, to be applied towards discharging the debts of the corporation on account of the middle and south levels;—under which act, 824A. 3R. 28P. were sold, the tax upon which amounted to £93. 16*s*. 7¼*d*.

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The chief officers of the corporation in the several districts are a surveyor-general,* a registrar, an auditor of the accounts, a receiver and expenditor-general, a sergeant at mace, one superintendant of the north level, three ditto of the middle level, one ditto of the south level.

As to the Middle and South Levels, and the Improvement of their Outfall by the Ouse and Eau Brink Cut.

The south level, including the high lands within its boundary, contains about 173,000 acres, and the middle level about 120,000 acres; the waters of both these levels pass down the river Ouse, through the town of Lynn, to their outfall at the sea. Before the division of the great level, the interest of all the fens was completely interwoven and blended together, but on its separation into districts, the consequence followed, that what related to the one had very little connexion with the other. The lands within the districts of the middle and south levels continued subject to frequent inundations, and complaints were still made of the imperfect state of the drainage; to remedy which, in some measure, the earl of Bedford, with his participants in the general undertaking, defended the middle level by a large bank from Peterborough to Wisbech.† A.D. 1650.

At a session of sewers holden at Lynn in 1709, on a presentation by the jury, they prayed that the court "would order some person of skill and probity to find a "sufficient outfall," but nothing effectual was done. The plan of deserting the old course of the Ouse, and

* The Bedford level act does not recognise this office.

† Dugdale, p. 415.

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making a new cut from Eau Brink to Lynn, was first proposed about the year 1720, by Mr. Kinderley,* who declared that the great impediment to drainage and navigation was the wide, shallow, and crooked channel of the river Ouse between St. German's bridge and Lynn, and that whilst this remained unremedied, all interior works would be of little use; many prejudices, however, existed against such a plan, which met with violent opposition.

When impediments were found to increase in the Lynn navigation, it was thought necessary to scour out the rivers and drains, and application was made to the Bedford level corporation for their assistance in cleansing the channel of the river Nene, which falls by the two branches of Well creek and Popham's eau into the Ouse at Salter's Lode, and making it deeper; and the parties having agreed on the outlines of a plan, an act of parliament was obtained in the 27th Geo. II. 1753,† whereby the corporation renounced their sole power over the river, and thereupon united with a stated number of land proprietors,

* He was a conservator of the great level of the fens, and had devoted the greatest part of a long life to the particular study of drainage.

† By the act 27th Geo. II. commonly called the Nene Act, the corporation of Bedford level were appointed commissioners for preserving the navigation of the river, united with the mayor and corporation of Lynn, ten inhabitants from Peterborough, six inhabitants from Whittlesea, (being owners of lands in the middle level,) and one each from Doddington, Benwick, and Wimblington, three from March, four from Ramsey, two each from Chatteris, Manea, and Welney, four from Upwell, two from Outwell, (being all respectively owners of lands in the middle level,) four inhabitants from Downham in Norfolk, and two from Thrapston, Islip, Oundle, Yaxley, Kelton, Elton, and Thornhaugh.

In the year 1823, a proposition was made for bringing a bill into parliament to amend the act of 27th Geo. II. and to improve the river Nene by deepening and widening the same, but after a few meetings and discussions on the intended measure, the bill was withdrawn.

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chosen from the south and middle districts, in raising a fund to be appropriated to scour out and deepen the bed of the Nene and its communicating branches; tolls were granted for completing and maintaining the navigation, and commissioners appointed to contract for the works necessary to be done; and the commissioners were to have full power to make orders and decrees for preserving the said navigation, but the rights and powers of the Bedford level corporation were not, in any other respect than as mentioned in that act, to be diminished. The drainage of these levels still continuing in an imperfect state, Mr. Kinderley (the son of the former gentleman) was about this time consulted thereon, who ventured to assert with confidence, that the only remedy was the making of a new cut from Eau Brink to Lynn, and that all other schemes would, in the end, prove ineffectual; the plan, however, still met with powerful opposition.* At a subsequent period, in 1775, governor Pownall addressed a memorial to the corporations of Bedford level and of Lynn, on the necessity of a new cut, and Mr. Golborne, an engineer, was employed to view, report, and give his opinion on a plan for a general drainage; he also pronounced on the necessity of such a new river, and asserted it could not fail of giving immediate relief to both these levels.†

* Mr. Kinderley also proposed a scheme for altering the channel of the Wisbech river, by cutting through Marshland, thereby to bring the Nene into the Ouse at Lynn; it is demonstrable that the fall would have been so great as to discharge all the water that could be led into it; but as this new cut was to draw the water from the Wisbech river, the gentlemen of property in and near, and merchants of Wisbech, would not acquiesce in a proposal that might tend to injure their navigation so materially, and upon this principle, such a proposal met with the warmest and most active opposition from that quarter.

† It was observed by Vancouver, at this time, that the waters of the middle level, being diverted from their natural course by the present forced

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In the years 1791 and 1792, a more general interest began to be excited, and meetings of persons interested in the improvement of the outfall of the Ouse were held in different towns, when the probable consequences of the intended cut were freely discussed. These meetings were numerously attended at various places, and it was declared by decided and large majorities, that the plan of making a new cut from Eau Brink to Lynn was the only likely method to render the drainage of the country perfect. The inhabitants of Lynn still continued their objections to the measure, which, they said, if adopted, would be productive of a train of injuries and fatal consequences to their port, for that the mouth of the cut opening at once in so broad a channel, full of loose shifting sands, extending more than fifteen miles to deep water, would be the cause of raising bars of sand and silth, which would choke up and destroy the harbour to sea, and thus obstruct the passage of the waters to their outfall; fears were also entertained by others, that the force of the water through the cut would be so great as to endanger their town and harbour, and indeed the original act seems to corroborate this apprehension, as a clause is introduced by the inhabitants of Lynn, for power to execute works for the better security and more effectual preservation of their town and harbour. In 1792, at a

system of drainage in the river Nene at Outwell, arrive within ten miles (reckoned on the general course of the old Ouse river) of Gunthorp sluice, through which all the waters of the north level are freely uttered, but from Outwell church, the waters of the Nene are driven six miles further, before they can obtain a very slow and languid descent, to seaward, through Salter's Lode sluice; the same erroneous system prevails in the whole drainage of the middle and the greater part of the south level of the fens, and is the legitimate offspring of the first diversion of old Ouse from its natural channel, and forcing its waters into the Lynn or lesser Ouse, through the cut which was formerly made from Littleport Chayre to Priest's Houses. Vancouver, App. p. 9, 10.

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general session of sewers holden at Lynn, the river Ouse, or channel between St. German's bridge and Lynn, was presented by the jury as being silted up, whereby the works of sewers were greatly impeded, and the court came to a resolution, "that the most probable mode of "obtaining relief for the country would be by making "a new river from Eau Brink to Lynn, through the "marshes, agreeable to the plan recommended by "Messrs. Mylne, Golborne, and Watté."* After various meetings at Ely, Cambridge, March, Lynn, &c. a bill was at length proposed, which in the year 1795 passed into a law, by the title of "An Act for improving the "Drainage of the Middle and South Levels, part of the "Great Level of the Fens called Bedford Level, as also of "the Lands adjoining or near to the River Ouse, and "altering the Navigation by a new Cut from Eau Brink "to Lynn," by which act the commissioners of drainage were empowered to make a new river or cut, to branch out of the river Ouse, near a place called Eau Brink, through certain lands and grounds, so as to fall again into the present course of the said river Ouse at or near the harbour of King's Lynn; the whole to measure from bank to bank 370 feet in breadth at the upper end of the cut, and the width of the channel formed by the said cut, at the junction with the present channel near Lynn, was to be not less than 278 yards.† This act, after it was obtained, continued without any active operation until about the year 1804, when a further amended act was passed, ever since which period the

* The opinions of Messrs. Mylne, James Golborne, Watté, Hudson, Rennie, &c. were unequivocally in favor of the cut.

† 278 yards was calculated as the actual width of the narrowest part of the harbour at or near to the ferry landing place. Act 35th Geo. III. c.77, s. 17.

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works relating to the Eau Brink have been in constant progress, and have also proved a continued source of contention and expense; five other acts have been since passed for increasing the tax and enlarging the powers of the former acts; at length, in the year 1819,* the excavation of this important work was begun, and after two years' operation, the cut was opened on 30th June 1821.† A bridge has also been erected over the new cut, just above the harbour of Lynn, which has opened a land communication between Lynn and Marshland, much nearer than by St. German's; these improvements and accommodations will no doubt lead to a progressive increase of population in this district, culture be more encouraged, and the proprietors of land greatly benefited.

After three years' experience of the effect of the waters passing through this new and confined channel, it was found that the port of Lynn had sustained deterioration, which it was stated was so progressively increasing, that its very existence, as a harbour, was threatened; opinions of engineers were taken thereon, who recommended the cut to be widened, and at a meeting at Cambridge, in August 1825, it was resolved to increase the sectional

* In cutting this new work, at the depth of twenty-two feet from the surface of the earth, and in a bed of chingle, a quantity of various kinds of marine shells was found, and from thence was taken out a pair of beautiful antlers, attached to the upper part of a scull, with every tooth remaining in its socket, in a perfect state, corresponding exactly with the ordinary description of the roe-buck. Above the chingle, in a stratum of strong ooze, about ten feet thick, quantities of alder roots and trees were found. See p. 15.

† This event was celebrated by a grand dinner, given by the Eau Brink commissioners, at the town hall of Lynn, at which the Rt. Hon. Lord William Cavendish Bentinck presided, supported by Sir Joseph Yorke, K. C. B. and many of the great landed proprietors of the country.

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A Plan

of the

RIVER NENE AND NORTH LEVEL,

and part of

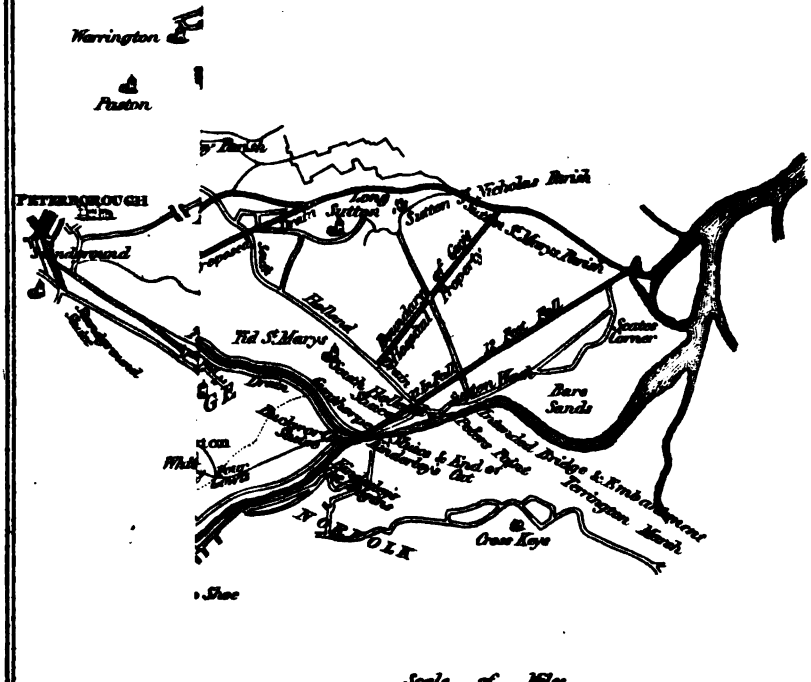
SOUTH HOLLAND,

with the

Proposed Lines of Drainage into Crab Hole.

By the late

JOHN RENNIE, ESQ.



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area thereof, not exceeding one-third. A contract was accordingly entered into with Sir Edward Banks for executing this work, for the sum of £33,000. and the operation of widening was commenced in February 1826.* Many other acts have been procured within the last seventy years, for draining separate districts of the country, but no alteration is made in the constitution of the corporation of Bedford level, except as to the north level, these acts all containing a clause, reserving the powers of the corporation as established by 15th Charles II.

As to the North Level, and the Separation thereof from the Middle and South Levels, and the Improvement of its Outfall by Crabb-Hole.

The north level, including the high land within its boundary, contains about 48,000 acres. As the waters of the middle and south levels passed down the river Ouse, through Lynn, to their outfall at the sea, so the waters of the north level passed through the interior of the same, and fell into the bay or estuary for the discharge of the river Nene, called Cross Keys Wash. The waters from this district are conveyed to Clow's Cross† by the old and new South Eau, and by the

* The original expense of this important work was estimated at £80,000. but upwards of £300,000. have already been expended in purchasing land, making compensations, engineers' bills, excavating the rivers, &c. besides the last-mentioned sum of £33,000. agreed to be paid for widening the cut, and the original tax of fourpence per acre has been raised to two shillings.

† This drain fell into the river Nene by Shire Gowt, about five miles below Wisbech, and was said to be the best drain to preserve the north side of Wisbech. The next cut to Clow's Cross is Peakirk Drain, which, by its low situation, is the best drain in this division of the fens; it is a cut of great antiquity, dug twenty-three feet broad, before the

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counter drain running under the north bank of Morton's Leam Wash, and from thence by the Shire drain to the Nene at Gunthorpe sluice; but this outfall being found ineffectual, methods were from time to time proposed for better preserving the outfall of the Nene waters, as well for the benefit of navigation as of drainage. Even so early as the year 1613,* it is stated by Dugdale, that a certain presentment was made at Lynn, by a jury for the hundred of Freebridge, in Marshland, as follows:— "In our opinion, upon our view taken, the waters of "Wisbech and Elm might be carried at this time a "nearer way to the sea, viz. from the four Gowts over "Tidd Marsh and Sutton Marshes, into a creek there, "called King's Creek,† and thence to fall into the deep "called Lutton Leam, and so to the sea, which is the "shortest course of the river by six miles, and hath a "much better outfall."

Again, in the year 1618, the following presentment was made by commissioners of sewers: "Also we find that "King's creek would be the best and safest outfall for "conveyance of the fresh waters to the sea, if a new "channel was cut; also we find the Shire drain to be "a very fair sewer, and useful for the preservation of "the north side of Wisbech."

adventurers were incorporated;—its progress is to Clow's Cross, where it arrives, after receiving the waters of Thorney dyke, through part of the Gold dyke. Labelye, 1745.

* This presentment is noticed in a pamphlet, published in 1820, by Tycho Wing, Esq. the respected agent to his grace the duke of Bedford, for his grace's estates in the north level, whose brother, father, and grandfather preceded him in that situation. It was signed by S. Fane, O. Cromwell, Robert Bevill, &c. Dugdale, p. 278.

† King's creek is said to be the ancient outfall of Wisbech. Badeslade, p. 136.

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The adventurers for the undertaking of the drainage of the level before-mentioned deepened and scoured out the cut originally made by Bishop Morton, they also caused various channels to be made to carry off the superfluous water wherewith the level was so much annoyed, and amongst the rest, Hill's cut, near Peterborough;* still constant losses were sustained from inundation, so that the corporation of Bedford level were advised to desert the river altogether, and for the improvement of drainage, they, at their own expense, resolved to make an entire new cut in Morton's Leam Wash, nearer to the north bank, which was ultimately effected, at the charge of the Bedford level corporation, about the year 1728, under the direction of one Thomas Smith, a conservator, so that the present navigable cut, though frequently called Morton's Leam, is, in fact, "Smith's Leam," Morton's Leam being deserted, and in a great measure landed up. Smith's cut, which embraces a portion called Hill's cut, was made in land purchased by the Bedford level corporation, in the wash, out of the corporation funds, and the waters pass on to Wisbech by this large wash, containing 3,500 acres, which in times of land floods is covered several feet deep in water.† A.D. 1616.

When the waters of the old Nene were divided by these cuts, part took their course as before, through the

* About two miles in length and fifty feet in breadth; besides which, the Bedford river, Sam's Cut, Bevill's Leam, New South Eau, and Shire Drain, were all cut and widened. Dug. p. 410.

† If the banks from Peterborough, by Guyhirn, to Wisbech, had been set only at a convenient distance one from another, and one fair cut for the waters to pass in, much money might thereby have been saved, and the work had been better; for experience will shew, that waters kept together in a body pass swiftly, and mend their channel, but divided and dispersed, pass away very slowly, and lose their channel. Badeslade.

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isle, by Standground sluice, through Whittlesea Mere, Ugg Mere, and Ramsey Mere, in the county of Huntingdon, to their outfall below Lynn; and part through Smith's Leam and the Wisbech river, to their outfall below Wisbech; but the navigation through the meres being at all times extremely tedious, difficult, and dangerous, vessels have, for many years, navigated from Standground sluice, through Whittlesey dyke, to a place called Flood's Ferry, as a safer and nearer passage, and have thence proceeded through March, Well creek, and Salter's Lode, where they communicate with the great Ouse. Notwithstanding the early diversion of the Ouse from its outfall at Wisbech, the waters of the Nene still continued for a long time to pass through March, pursuing their course by Elm Leam to Wisbech, and thus to the sea, but this latter ancient watercourse at length decayed and grew up.

A.D. 1721. In 1721 or 1722, Kinderley proposed a cut below Wisbech, for the purpose of turning the channel then meandering amongst the shifting sands, directly under Gunthorpe sluice, the outlet of the north level waters, which was actually begun; but the gentlemen of Wisbech, apprehensive that their navigation would be injured by the wide in-draught being lessened, caused the works to be forthwith demolished, and an injunction was afterwards obtained from the Lord Chancellor, to put an effectual stop to any further progress. The waters of the Nene, which now fall by Smith's Leam into the Wisbech river at Guyhirn, and thence through the town of Wisbech, form a stream of considerable importance for navigation as well as drainage, often called the "river "Nene," though erroneously, the old Nene passing, as before observed, by Standground, through March, and from thence to Outwell and Salter's Lode, into the

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great Ouse; at Wisbech, the channel is known by no other name than "the great river," and is so denominated in all legal proceedings. This river, which empties itself, by Cross Keys Wash, into the great bay or estuary at a place called the Eye, about thirteen miles distant from Wisbech, admits the flux and reflux of the tide, so as thereby to enable vessels of one hundred tons burthen, at spring tides, to come up and deliver their cargoes at the quays within the town.

The affairs of the Bedford level corporation becoming embarrassed, and constant jealousies arising amongst the proprietors of the different levels, a limited or partial separation of the north from the other levels, middle and south, at length became advisable, and was carried into effect by an act of 27th Geo. II. called the north level act, so far as respected their revenues; the several accounts between the levels themselves, and between the levels and the creditors of the corporation, being previously settled, there was due to the duke of Bedford and the earl of Lincoln, as principal proprietors of the north level, on account of that level, the sum of £18,900 and upwards, viz. to the duke of Bedford five sixths or £15,750. and the remaining one sixth, £3,150, to the earl of Lincoln, proprietor of the estate since belonging to lord Eardley. The duke of Bedford most generously remitted the whole of his debt, and the security was cancelled; the earl of Lincoln as generously concurred in the measure, and the transaction received the sanction of Parliament. The north level act directs the several works to which the said revenues were to be applied, one part to be under the immediate direction of the north level commissioners, and the other under the direction of the officer to the corporation of Bedford

A.D. 1753.

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level; by the same act, a district of country, not within the said Bedford level, called Great Portsand, containing about 7,000 acres, then belonging to Sir Charles Orby, and now to Thomas Orby Hunter, Esq. lying in the adjoining manor of Crowland, was added to the north level, and directed to be drained therewith; and for convenience of interior drainage, the north level and Great Portsand were divided into five districts,* and commissioners appointed, called "north level commissioners." This district encountered several misfortunes from the year 1763 to the year 1770, by inundations and tempestuous weather; in 1763, the north bank of Morton's Leam Wash broke, in consequence of the violence of the flood waters, and drowned a considerable extent of the level, involving the loss of several lives, and of much cattle and property. Partial breaches occurred in 1765 and 1767; but in the year 1770, so terrible a breach took place, that the whole country, for several miles, was covered six feet deep upon the average, and the most dreadful consequences ensued to the north level.†

* The first, containing 11,500 acres, is bounded on the west by the high lands of the soke of Peterborough, from which it is separated by an ancient Roman drain called the Carr Dyke, which acts as a catch-water drain to the whole north level. This great Roman work extended originally from the river Nene below Peterborough, to the city of Lincoln, and, perhaps, to the river Trent at Torkesey; the course was traced by the late Mr. Rennie, the greatest part of the way, and pronounced a most judicious and well-laid-out work. The second district contains 4,200 acres; the third, or Thorney Lordship, 17,600 acres; the fourth, 7,000 acres; and the fifth, called Great Portsand, 7,750 acres—making together 47,750 acres.

† The amount for repairs of the north bank, after the great breach in 1770, was £5,989. 7*s*. 3*d*.;—in 1772, £2,857. 11*s*. 1*d*.;—in 1773, £4,391. 2*s*. 7*d*.;—in 1774, £2,108. 15*s*. 9*d*.;—in 1775, £1,450.;—after a high flood in 1795, £2,174. 7*s*. 1*d*.;—after ditto in 1796, £2,434. 10*s*. 11*d*.

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For the preservation of the works of the north level, an act was obtained in the year 1771 for the maintenance of such works, which were thereby directed to be vested in a committee of eighteen persons, to be annually chosen from the commissioners of the five districts, and called "the Committee of Works." It may be here observed, that the corporation of Bedford level have for many years granted to his grace the duke of Bedford, a lease of the benefit of the north bank of Morton's Leam, with the forelands, &c. from Knarr Lake,* to the upper end of the bank near Peterborough. This lease has been renewed to the Bedford family, from time to time, to the present day; certain tolls have also been taken, and the monies arising therefrom appropriated to the repairs of the bank. Immediately after the passing of the act in 1771, the committee of the north level, being daily eye witnesses of the damage occasioned to the north bank of Morton's Leam, and the forelands thereof, put a stop for a time to the haling thereon,† and afterwards, in 1795, in consequence of the great injury done by heavy waggons, an order was made by the north level committee, and acquiesced in by the Bedford level corporation, that no heavy waggon should, under any circumstances, be permitted to pass on the bank; since which time, the passage of any description of carriage has been prevented, and the bank is now only used as a bridle road. Although no breach of the bank has occurred since 1770, still great anxiety has been always felt, for obtaining a better and more speedy passage for the upland waters to sea. About that period, (1770) the outfall of the river below Wisbech became so bad,

* A place near a house called the Cross Guns, on the bank of the river.

† The haling has been since continued on payment of a toll.

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that the north level proprietors resumed the project recommended by Mr. Kinderley in 1721, and afterwards by his son in 1751, of abandoning the old river, and making a new cut from a place called the river's end, below the town of Wisbech, through the common salt marsh in Tid St. Giles, and to continue the same to near Gunthorpe sluice. This plan, it was conceived, would not only be of great benefit to the drainage, but tend to the preservation of certain lands lying in the contiguous parishes of Tid and Newton. The measure, however, was at first strongly opposed by the commissioners of sewers for the hundred of Wisbech; and the Bedford level corporation having expressed their intentions of encouraging the imposition of a tax upon all vessels navigating the said cut, the corporation of Wisbech strongly objected to any tax whatever affecting their trade and commerce, and subscribed £500. to unite with the commissioners of sewers in opposition thereto; at length the parties came to an amicable understanding, and the north level proprietors undertook, at their own expense, amounting to £10,000., (with the exception of £1,000. contributed from the middle and south levels, and £1,000. from a small district draining by Buckworth sluice into Kinderley's cut,* called the Tid and Newton district) to complete the work, and in the year 1773 an act was passed, intituled, "An Act for "draining and preserving certain Lands and Grounds "in the Parishes of Tid St. Giles and Newton, in the "Isle of Ely, in the County of Cambridge, and in Tid "St. Mary's, in the County of Lincoln;" by authority

* Called Kinderley's cut, though made many years after the decease of that engineer, but, as a plan recommended by him, the public gave his name to the work.

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whereof, the commissioners of the north level were empowered to make the cut; and a clause was introduced, to secure the free usage of the said cut for all persons navigating vessels between the town of Wisbech and the sea. This cut was carried through the green marshes, about a mile and a half in length, and avoided the moveable sand banks and shoals in the old channel, lying on the Norfolk side thereof, which produced the effect of lowering the waters at Gunthorpe sluice (the north level outlet) six feet, on the first opening of the works, thereby securing a better outfall for the waters of the low lands to the sea; it had also a most salutary effect on the navigation of the port of Wisbech, which had grown into an alarming decay; the town was relieved from its former depressed state, and trade and commerce began again to flourish. This cut has certainly caused the river to increase in depth so far as the confinement extends, which seems to be a demonstration, that when the like confinement is continued to the sea, a similar relief will be afforded, not only to drainage, but also to navigation. By this act, the old channel or bare sands were vested in the Bedford level corporation, which were surveyed * and marked out, and their situation and extent defined as follows:—

	A.	R.	P.
In Tid St. Giles	104	3	22
— Tid St. Mary's ..	488	3	15
— Long Sutton	3270	3	2
— Lutton	1362	2	11
— Gedney	2230	2	11
	7457	2	21

* By John Watté, an eminent surveyor, in 1777.

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Of this large tract, only 200 acres, or thereabouts, have been embanked and inclosed, and are called "the "Corporation Farm." The projectors of this cut were so satisfied with the benefits which would result from the execution of it, that, by the act, provision is made for extending it, as circumstances will admit, to the sea, and for vesting the marshes and sands, which would be thereby recovered, in the Bedford level corporation, as trustees, indeed, for the north level commissioners, (who, as a body annually elected, could not hold them) in aid of so beneficial and important an undertaking.

As it has ever been an object of great interest to the north level and the adjacent fens to obtain a better outfall, so have the proprietors seized every opportunity
A.D. of encouraging plans for an improved drainage, and in the
1813. year 1813, Mr. Rennie, a gentleman of acknowledged talent as an engineer, made report upon a plan for such improvement, by recommending the discharge of the waters of the north level into the sea at Crabb-hole. He commences his report by stating that this portion of the plan is attended with much difficulty, on account of the Nene passing through the town of Wisbech, where the channel is so narrow, and the buildings so close to the river, that there was not room to widen or deepen it, unless a considerable number of houses were to be taken down, and even the bridge itself; he also stated that when the levels were taken, there was a fall, at low water, from Sutton Wash to Crabb-hole, a distance of something less than four miles, of twelve feet; that the outfall of the river, below Gunthorpe sluice, was also in a bad state, owing to the shifting sands; and that the great bar to the discharge of the Nene waters, and of course to the general drainage of the

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lands depending on the river, was the high and shifting sands between Gunthorpe sluice and Crabb-hole, and the narrow and confined channel of the river, through the town of Wisbech: whereupon he recommended a new channel from the mouth of Kinderley's cut, at Gunthorpe sluice, to the level of the low water in the bay, at Crabb-hole.* From the mouth of Kinderley's cut to the Horse-shoe below Wisbech, he proposed the old channel to be enlarged, and a new cut made from the Horse-shoe, in a straight line, to Rummer's mill. The estimate of the expense of the works for the improvement of the north level, and outfall of the Nene, including a district called South Holland, was £637,317. of which £373,713. related to the drainage of the north level, by Wisbech outfall, or Crabb-hole.† The magnitude of this expense seemed to deter all parties from making any attempt towards carrying works of such extent into execution, until the year 1818, when the right honorable lord William Cavendish Bentinck, a

A.D. 1818

* It has been shown that this is by no means an opinion peculiar to the present day. See p. 60.

† By Mr. Bower's levels, taken in 1813, the fall at low water was as under:—

	MILES.	FT.	IN.
From Sutton Wash to Crabb-hole	4	fall of 12	0
Surface of water at South Holland sluice to ditto	4½	—— 12	7
—————— Gunthorpe sluice to ditto ..	5½	—— 13	0
From Wisbech bridge to ditto	11½	—— 13	6
—— Guyhirn ferry to ditto	17	—— 14	6
—— Peterborough bridge to ditto	30½	—— 18	6

	MILES.		FT.	IN.	
From Sutton Wash to Crabb-hole ..	4	an average fall of	3	0	per mile.
—— Wisbech bridge to Sutton Wash	7½	——————	0	0⅝	——
—— Peterborough bridge to Wisbech bridge	19	——————	0	3 3/19	——
—— Peterborough bridge to Sutton Wash	26	——————	0	3	——

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nobleman of great powers of mind and active spirit, called a meeting at Lynn, to consider, as a distinct object, the propriety of erecting a bridge over the Nene, at the nearest practicable point to the sea, whereby a direct communication would be established from Norfolk and Suffolk, into Lincolnshire and the north of England, an improvement undoubtedly of great importance; and an estimate being made by Mr. Rennie, he reported
A.D. that a bridge at Gunthorpe sluice would cost £16,010.
1819. and one at Cross Keys Wash, £35,070, nevertheless the latter, though of considerably greater expense, was thought to be the most eligible situation. The corporation and inhabitants of Wisbech were very jealous of this measure, as of injurious tendency to the trade and navigation of their river. For some time the promoters of this separate measure suspended their own immediate object as to the bridge, in the hope of embracing with its ultimate execution, what they considered to be a more efficient system of drainage, and to take into their consideration the practicability of carrying into effect, *in whole or in part*, the great plan recommended by Mr Rennie in the year 1813, relative to the drainage of the north level and South Holland, by Crabb-hole. The promoters of the bridge scheme, perceiving objections to be raised to the erection of a bridge, as a separate measure, earnestly invited the landed proprietors to combine with the bridge plan a better system of drainage, and a second report of Mr. Rennie's being obtained in 1819, the fact which had not been, perhaps, before sufficiently noticed, was therein more forcibly adverted to, viz. that between *Gunthorpe sluice* and *Sutton Wash* there was only a fall of *twelve inches*, whilst between *Sutton Wash* and *Crabb-hole* there was a fall of *twelve feet*.

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In October 1820, a meeting, very numerously attended, was held at Wisbech, the most noble the marquis of Tavistock presiding, when a resolution was entered into, that Mr. Rennie's plan appeared calculated to hold out the best and most effectual means of improving the navigation and drainage, and establishing a safe communication, by a bridge, between the counties of Norfolk and Lincoln, and thereupon Mr. Rennie was directed to make a further report upon the probable expense of a new cut for the Nene, from Gunthorpe sluice, according to a line, as stated by him, to a place called Skate's Corner, in length four miles and three quarters, and from thence to low water at Crabb-hole, in length about a mile, which he accordingly estimated at £176,872.;* upon this report it was determined that the improvements in the course of the Nene were practicable, but on its being explained that Mr. Rennie recommended a plan for making a new course for the river, from the Horse-shoe to Rummer's mill, by converting the present bed of the river, through the town of Wisbech, into a floating harbour, the corporation and merchants of Wisbech, on deliberation, resolved to lay the several plans before Mr. Telford,† who, upon taking a view, suggested an alteration in the course of the river, for that part which runs between the Horse-shoe and Rummer's mill, different from that proposed by Mr. Rennie, which consisted in making a new cut, commencing from a point a little beyond the turnpike on the South Brink, proceeding at the back of all the houses in the town of Wisbech on the line of the South Brink, and falling into the river again below the present bridge; in removing the bridge, and widening and A.D. 1820.

* By a letter addressed to G. A. Adam, Esq. auditor to his grace the duke of Bedford, dated 30th January 1821,—afterwards printed.

† An eminent engineer.

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deepening the channel of the river through the town, and in cutting through the point of land below the town at the Horse-shoe, the expense of which, in purchasing private property and cutting through the same, would be about 80,000., by which plan the flux and reflux of the tide through the town would be preserved. In the course of the summer of 1821, the report of the proceedings of the committee for considering the best means of following up Mr. Rennie's report of 1813 was printed, when the committee declared their opinion on the practicability of carrying the whole of the general scheme into effect, and that the estimated expense of all the suggested improvements relating to the river Nene would be about £400,000., which was proposed to be raised by means of transferrable bonds, bearing interest at £5. per cent. to be sold in the market, at the price of the day, like East India bonds, viz.

1st operation, Cut from Crabb-hole to Gunthorpe sluice	£ 186,656
2d ditto, deepening and widening the river from Gunthorpe sluice to the Horse-shoe	44,544
3d ditto, improving the river to Rummer's mill	80,000
4th ditto, a new river from Rummer's mill to Peterborough	86,803
	£398,003

or, in round numbers, £400,000.

A.D. 1821. To raise this enormous sum, it was proposed to lay a proportionate tax upon the lands,* together with a tax

* The districts draining by Wisbech river consist of the north level and Portsand, containing about 48,000 acres;—South Holland, 34,000;—

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on the navigation of two shillings per chaldron upon coals, and two shillings and sixpence per ton upon all other merchandize. The harvest of this year proving most unpropitious, through continual rains during the reaping season, agricultural produce, which had been declining, became farther depreciated, so that many of the farming occupiers were losing their diminished capitals most rapidly, and others were absolutely reduced to poverty; to burthen the country, therefore, any further at this period, was considered a most impolitic measure. A meeting was, however, called at Peterborough on the 22d of November, for the purpose of receiving the report of the committee appointed in October 1820, which his grace the duke of Bedford attended in person, supported by earl Fitzwilliam, lord William Bentinck, lord viscount Strathaven, and many gentlemen of the country, when, after much discussion, the early execution of the extended scheme was agreed upon, and a committee appointed to prepare the heads of a bill to parliament; a strong protest was entered against the measure on the part of the corporation and inhabitants of Wisbech, as well as of the surrounding land owners, upon the principle, that the embarrassed and distressed state of the country at that period rendered it more than ever inexpedient to prosecute such a scheme.

A.D. 1822.

After the late wet season, the outfall so much improved, that for a series of years it had not been in so good a state for the purposes of drainage and navigation, the latter of which was so greatly benefited, that vessels of one hundred tons burthen could bring their full cargoes

Sutton St. Edmund's, Sutton St. James, and Tid St. Mary's, 5,700;—Wisbech north side, Tid, Newton, Leverington, and Parson Drove, 17,700;—Walderses and Begdale, on the south side of the river, 8,000;—land in Morton's Leam Wash, 3,500;—total quantity, 116,900 acres.

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up to the town of Wisbech with ease; when the proprietors of estates, as well as the merchants of Wisbech, observing the natural improvements in the drainage and navigation, and considering the heavy burthen to which their lands and trade must be subject, by adopting the extended plan, estimated at nearly half a million of money, became more fixed in their opposition to the measure, and determined upon withholding their consents to such scheme. This opposition did not arise from any desire to raise obstacles for the purpose of preventing improvements in the outfall, but simply from the magnitude of the sum required to carry into effect such a scheme, and the consequent ruinous taxation which must be laid upon the trade of Wisbech, and on the landed estates, to enable the promoters to discharge the interest of such an enormous capital. We know that when engineers are consulted, they regard not pecuniary obstacles, but lay down plans on a large scale, without considering the difficulties of accomplishment. Most unprejudiced persons in Wisbech are aware that there are serious impediments to the passage of the flood waters to the sea, from the narrow channel through the town, and they are and ever have been ready to unite with the country in facilitating any measure for improving the course of the waters upon any moderate scale, such as easing the bend of the river below the opening of the new road leading to Peterborough, heretofore called Barton Lane; cutting a channel from the toll bar on the south side to the west end of Mr. Marriott's house; making an additional arch, and giving a greater water-way to the bridge; straightening the channel of the Horse-shoe, by cutting through the lands on the east side of the river; confining and deepening the channel of the Nene to the sea,* or

* A plan of this nature was presented to the corporation of Wisbech by Mr. Girdlestone, a very intelligent member of that body, in the year 1823,

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by any other practicable and reasonable means within their ability. When it was understood that the landed proprietors were resolved to refuse their assent to the intended measure, it was again for a time suspended. The promoters of the bridge scheme being, however, determined to persevere, renewed their object as a separate measure, expressing, at the same time, their desire to unite it with any plan for extending the river to Crabb-hole, in any way which Messrs. Telford and Rennie might point out, and in the autumn of 1825, the attention of the country was again called by lord William Bentinck, towards the erection of a bridge over the Cross Keys Wash, and the opening of a direct communication between the counties of Lincoln and Norfolk, and in order to carry the measure into effect, it was proposed that an application should be made to parliament, and that the money required for the undertaking should be raised by transferrable shares of £50. each, the cost, with contingencies, being estimated at £50,000. A.D. 1825.

In the prospectus afterwards published, relative to this undertaking, it was stated, that by the second report of the late Mr. Rennie in 1819, certain advantages were overlooked, which would result both to drainage and navigation, by confining the river below to one channel, as well as leading to another improvement, viz. the prolongation of Kinderley's cut to the Cross Keys Wash, which would become virtually a part of his great plan.

The town of Wisbech still viewed with some anxiety the erection of a bridge and embankment across Sutton

whose object, as he observed, was not then to excite discussion, but to direct the attention of the capital burgesses to a serious consideration of the subject on a future occasion.

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Wash, as a separate measure, being apprehensive that such a work would not only materially impede the passing and repassing of vessels between the town and the sea, but greatly obstruct the free and unrestricted
A.D. flux and reflux of the tidal waters, and thereupon
1826. consulted another eminent engineer,* who stated decidedly that the bridge would, as an unconnected measure, have disadvantageous effects, and by diminishing the rise of the tide, would injure the navigation to Wisbech; and that the rapidity of the current through the intended bridge would render it hazardous for vessels to pass in the strength of the tide, as might be instanced at London bridge, and consequently, vessels bound to Wisbech would be delayed too long to reach that town in the same tide; and that this rapid current, after passing the contraction, would expand itself, and form a bar by the deposit of the sand and silth carried up with it; and that no measure of improvement, connected with the proposed bridge and embankment, could be essentially efficient for the purposes of navigation and drainage, *unless the discharge of all the land waters should be carried beyond the mouth of the estuary.*

Whilst the corporation and merchants of Wisbech were deliberating upon these proceedings, and the probably injurious effects to the existing rights and interests of the town and port, a communication was received from Tycho Wing, Esq.† that there was a probability of some plans being suggested for the general improvement of drainage and navigation, by the Wisbech river to the sea, which were afterwards laid before the public, and their principle adopted by the committees of

* William Chapman, Esq. † See note, p. 60.

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the several parties interested in the respective districts, at a general meeting, which soon after took place in London.

Other engineers who had been consulted as to the bridge also gave their opinion, that it would be attended with injurious effects to the navigation of Wisbech, *unless a new channel was made for the discharge of the waters of the Nene*, which induced the proprietors of the north level to turn their attention to an improved outfall, not only by the prolongation of Kinderley's cut to the intended bridge, but in making a new channel from such bridge to Crabb-hole. A general conference was held in London, between lord William Bentinck, with a committee of promoters of the bridge and embankment, on the one part, and committees of the corporation and merchants of Wisbech, and of proprietors of the north level and other districts, on the other part, when, after considerable discussion, it was determined to form a new channel from the end of Kinderley's cut to Crabb-hole, together with the bridge and embankment, as one united measure; and that the expense thereof should be forthwith ascertained. Negociations were accordingly entered into with the merchants and traders of Wisbech, the proprietors of lands in Wisbech hundred and South Holland, and the claimants of the sands, to ascertain their proportionate contributions, according to the benefit which they would respectively derive. The expense of prolonging Kinderley's cut, and forming a new channel to Crabb-hole, was estimated at £130,000. His grace the duke of Bedford, and the proprietors of land in the north level and Great Portsand, declared themselves willing to

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undertake the work, upon being assured that £60,000.* would be contributed by the other parties interested. Upon this proposition, a meeting was called at Wisbech, when the town and trade, in a most spirited manner, consented to raise one-half of that sum, by a tax of sixpence per ton upon all goods and merchandize arriving at the port, on condition of being indemnified from all further payments. The same proposals were afterwards discussed in general meetings of the proprietors of landed estates, connected with the intended improvements; and the execution and maintenance of the proposed works were undertaken by the north level on the following terms, which were ultimately agreed to:—

Wisbech town and trade to advance	£30,000
Proprietors of estates in Wisbech hundred	15,000
Sutton St. Edmund's	2,000
Sutton St. James, Tid St. Mary's, and Little Portsand, (consent not yet declared) say	3,000
South Holland	7,000
Promoters of the bridge	3,000
	£60,000

* The whole expense of a new river from Guntlhorpe sluice to Crabb-hole would be £130,000.—to be thus raised:—

From the duke of Bedford, and the north level and Great Portsand proprietors, at one shilling per acre, say	£48,000
Wisbech trade at sixpence per ton	30,000
Carried forward	£78,000

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Upon this basis, the parties at length came to an amicable conclusion. The bill for erecting the bridge and embankment was allowed to proceed and pass into a law, with a clause to the following effect: "And "whereas * the most noble John, duke of Bedford, "and the proprietors of lands in the north level and "Great Portsand, with the concurrence of the governor, "bailiffs, and company of conservators, have it in con- "templation to make certain works for forming a new "cut or channel, and confining the waters from the "north end of a cut called Kinderley's cut, to deep "water at or near a place called Crabb-hole, below the "site of the said intended bridge, in order as well to "remove the danger apprehended from the construction "of the said bridge and embankment, as to improve "the navigation of the Wisbech river, and the outfall "of the several lands draining by or through the said "Sutton Wash to the sea, which last-mentioned works "will require an expenditure of the sum of £130,000. on

Brought forward	£78,000	
Lands in Wisbech hundred	15,000	
—— South Holland	7,000	
Promoters of the bridge	3,000	
Lands in Sutton St. Edmund's	2,000	
—— Sutton St. James, Tid St. Mary's, and Little Portsand, say	3,000	
	——	£108,000
Deficiency to be made good from the sands		22,000
		£130,000

* The act is intituled "An Act for constructing a Bridge across Sutton "Wash, otherwise called Cross Keys Wash, between the Counties of "Lincoln and Norfolk." It received the royal assent 26th May 1826, (7th Geo. IV.)

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"thereabouts, upon receiving the sum of £60,000. to "be contributed towards the expense thereof by several "parties interested therein, and by the application of "the produce of the bare sands and salt marshes below "Kinderley's cut, now vested in the said governor, "bailiffs, and commonalty, for continuing the said cut "and improving the outfall of the Wisbech river to "sea; Be it therefore further enacted, That the said "bridge and banks, authorized to be constructed by this "act, or any of them, or any of the works connected "therewith, shall not be commenced or proceeded in "until after the end of the next session of parliament." When the new cut is made to deep water at Crabb-hole, the sands will no doubt rise considerably, and a great portion thereof may be taken in within a few years.

The bridge and cross embankments will also have a tendency to induce the deposit of earth, and by this means protect the marshes and sands lying south of the latter. It is to be observed, that the salt marshes which the sea throws up, and has left, and is still leaving upon the coast, (some whereof are embanked, and some lie open) are higher by three or four feet at least than the old country, and every marsh newly taken in is higher than that which was taken in before it, and the longer it is before a marsh be taken in, the higher it is when it is so inclosed; so that the highest lands in this level country are those which lie next the sea, the waters, therefore, cannot run off directly to sea by the old drains, but some other means must be devised to carry them off, and without good outfalls, all inward works and banks are fruitless. Since the general drainage of the fens, there never was evinced a more universal spirit for improvement than at the present time. We

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Plan

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AND

EMBANK

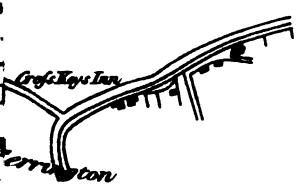
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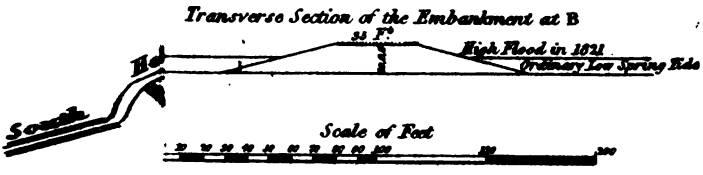
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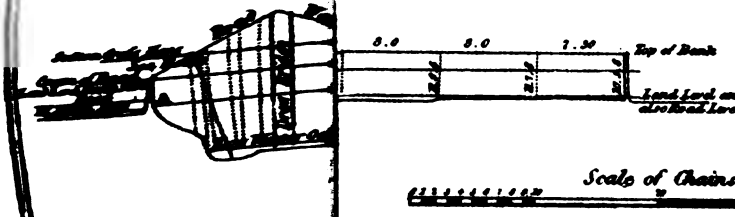




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have seen that it was the opinion of our ancestors, as well as that of the present day, that an improved outfall was a most desirable object: when this is gained, we have only to follow up, in the best manner we possibly can, such plans and works as are most likely to accomplish the design begun. The sea, no doubt, continues to retreat as it has done for ages, which must greatly facilitate the complete drainage. The proposed channel appears to be well calculated to afford the means of obtaining a perfect drainage for all the low lands in the north level and Portsand, and of providing for the safe and unobstructed discharge of the upland floods, and thus to rescue the country from the frequent losses and general insecurity of property, occasioned by the present insufficient and precarious outfall through Sutton Washway.

The line of drainage designed has received the sanction of men of talent, such as Kinderley, Mylne, Golborne, Whitworth, Watté, Ellstob, Yeoman, &c. whose opinions are of weight, and they are corroborated by the most eminent men of the present day, Messrs. Rennie, Telford, Chapman, &c. which, we are willing to trust, will establish in the minds of all reasonable men the probable success of the intended plan, and remove ancient prejudices. It is a principle that no man can deny, that the primary object in the drainage of a flat country is the obtaining of a good and permanent outfall: the shorter the course by which the waters of a river are conveyed from the uplands to the sea, the more readily will they be discharged; and as no course is so short as a straight line, the nearer the channel approaches thereto, the better. "Where a river is duly confined, the "pressure is greatest, and the stream the strongest and

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"swiftest, and there, consequently, the channel must "grind the deepest. Widen a channel, and you weaken "its current; straiten, and you strengthen it; the "first feeds and fills up the channel, the last grinds "and deepens it."*

The object, in fact, of the measure has been stated as designed to afford an improved drainage and security from inundation, not only to the north level of the fens and the adjoining country, but to improve the navigation to Wisbech and Peterborough from the sea; and the proprietors of lands in the north level seem so deeply impressed with the importance of the measure, that they agree to take upon themselves the risk and expense of executing and maintaining the necessary works, on receiving from the parties who are to derive advantage from them, contributions in proportion to those advantages, together with a part of the sands that will be reclaimed, and of the marsh lands that will be protected from the sea by the proposed works. The measure will embrace many distinct interests, but there is little doubt, when it is brought forward for execution, that the general interests of the public will be strictly attended to, and no burthen imposed upon any class of persons, for which they do not receive a corresponding benefit.

The corporation of Bedford level have always, since the passing of the acts of Charles II. been considered the natural protectors of the whole of that tract of country, and have ever shewn the strongest disposition to do every thing in their power for its drainage, as

* Kinderley, p. 52

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well as to guard the rights of the fen proprietors. The taxes raised under their authority amount to £8,000. per annum, and upwards, the whole whereof is employed for the general benefit of the drainage of the country. The services rendered by the board have from time to time been very important, and the powers vested in them are acknowledged to have been always exercised with discretion and benefit to all the level, the proprietors whereof feel satisfaction in placing the utmost confidence in that honourable and respectable body; and it is evident that, as a corporate and powerful body, invested with considerable funds and powers, they have the means of contributing largely to the preservation and improvement of this extensive tract of country, for the benefit of all who are interested in it. The efforts of the Bedford level corporation and the country are moved by the same impulse, and directed by the best and wisest conclusions.

The following Noblemen and Gentlemen compose at this time (1826) *the Honourable Corporation of Bedford Level.*

GOVERNOR,

The Most Noble John, Duke of Bedford.

BAILIFFS,

The Rev. George Leonard Jenyns.
William Henry Fellowes, Esq. M. P.
The Rt. Hon. Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, K. G.
John Thurlow Dering, Esq.
Sir C. Morgan, Bart.
Thomas Orton, Esq.

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CONSERVATORS,

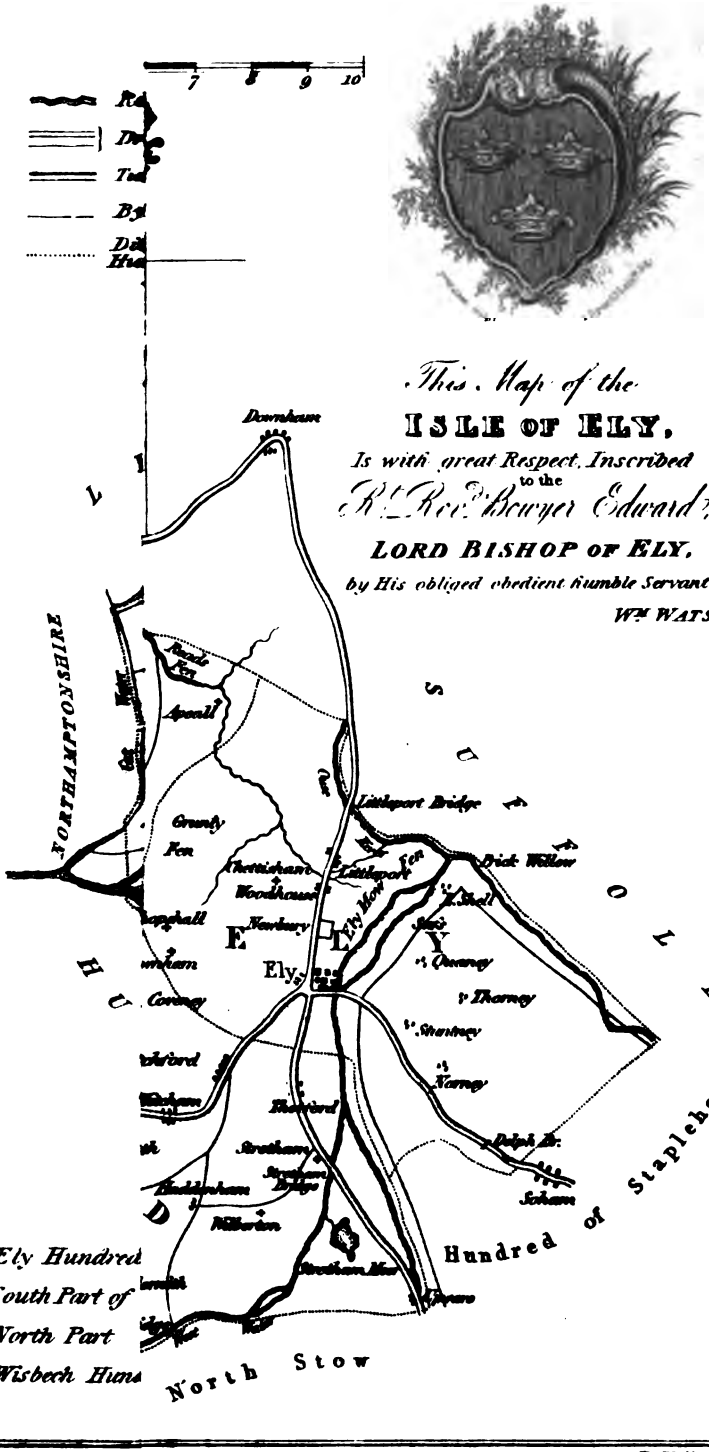
The Rt. Hon. Charles Yorke.	John Fryer, Esq.
Harry S. Waddington, Esq.	H. J. Nicholls, Esq.
Lord Viscount Milton.	Tycho Wing, Esq.
Wm. Dunn Gardner, Esq.	Charles Jenyns, Esq.
Richard Orton, Esq.	R. G. Townley, Esq.
Joseph Vipan, Esq.	George Pryme, Esq.
The Marquis of Tavistock.	John J. Angerstein, Esq.
William G. Adam, Esq.	Hon. W. Twistleton.
Jonathan Page, Esq.	Thomas Spooner, Esq.
William Roberts, Esq.	John Hibbert, Esq.

The Earl of Hardwicke, *Surveyor-General.*
Samuel Wells, Esq. *Register.*
Steed Girdlestone, Esq. *Auditor.*
H. R. Evans, Esq. *Receiver and Expenditor-General.*

Having given an outline of the different changes in the state of the Great Level, we now proceed, in the *second place*, with a description of that part of it called the Isle of Ely.

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THE ISLE OF ELY.

In the register of Peterborough it is said, that in the country of the Gyrvii, (being those which inhabit near the fens) there is a famous monastery,* heretofore called Medehamstead, but now Burgh,† within which precinct Ely is situated, being an island containing twenty-two towns, compassed on every side with waters, and whereunto there are four causeways.‡ This island was made choice of for a place of voluntary retirement by those who, out of great piety, betook themselves wholly to the service of God, and strict abstinence; and though these pious votaries first settled here, as a place of solitude, yet the conveniency of fish, which was the chief part of their food, was another reason for such choice, for after the

* Dugdale, p. 178. The first monastery in the world is said to have been founded A. D. 270, into which the sister of St. Anthony retired.

† Now called Peterborough. "Burgh" was characteristic of a Saxon city; "Cester," of a Roman.

‡ The register of Ramsey says, "The entrances into the isle were, "first, at Littleport; second, at Stuntney; third, at Alderhethe Brigg; and fourth, at Exith Brigg."

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rule of St. Benedict* came to be observed in the Christian world, the monks of that order abstained from the use of flesh; which rule was in so high an esteem, that

* The Benedictine order of monks was the most ancient since the Saxons; they wore a loose black gown, with large wide sleeves, and a cowl on their heads, ending in a point behind. In the Canon Law, they are stiled Black Friars, from the colour of their habit: this order produced a great number of eminent writers and learned men. A brief recital of their rules may probably not be unacceptable:—First, as to the *Hours* of prayer in the chapel; they were obliged to perform their devotion seven times within the four-and-twenty hours: they are commonly ranged under these distinctions;—first, at cock-crowing, or the *Nocturnal:* this service was performed at two o'clock in the morning; the ground for pitching upon this hour is taken partly from David's saying, "At midnight I will praise the "Lord;" and partly from a tradition of our Saviour's rising from the dead about that time.

Secondly, *Matins:* these are said at the first hour; or, according to our computation, at six o'clock. At this time the Jewish morning sacrifice was offered. The angels, likewise, are supposed to have acquainted the women with our Saviour's resurrection at this hour.

Thirdly, the *Tierce*, which was at nine in the morning, when our Saviour was condemned and scourged by Pilate.

Fourthly, the *Sexte*, or twelve at noon, when our Saviour was crucified, and the sun eclipsed to a total darkness.

Fifthly, the *None*, or three in the afternoon; at this hour our Saviour expired, and besides, it was a time for public prayer in the temple.

Sixthly, *Vespers:* these were said at six in the afternoon; the reason for the time is, because the evening sacrifice was then offered in the Jewish temple, and our blessed Saviour is supposed to have been taken down from the cross at this hour.

Seventhly, the *Compline:* this service was performed after seven, when our Saviour's agony in the garden was believed to begin.

The monks, going to bed at eight, had six hours to sleep before the *Nocturnal* began; neither, if they went to bed afterwards, was it reckoned a fault, but after *Matins* they were not allowed that liberty.

To proceed:—after the tolling of the bell for prayers, the monks were immediately to leave off their business; and here the *Canon*, it seems, was so strict, that those who copied books, or were clerks in any business, and had begun a *Text* letter, were not allowed to finish it. Those who were

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all the monasteries then in being in the realm began with much reverence to maintain a strict regard to its provisions.

absent, and employed in the business of the house, were reckoned present as to excuse and duty, and that they might not suffer by being elsewhere, they were particularly recommended to the Divine protection.

The monks were obliged to go always two together; this was done to guard their conduct, to prompt them to good thoughts, and furnish them with a witness to defend their behaviour.

From *Easter* to *Whitsuntide*, they dined at twelve and supped at six; in this interval the primitive church observed no fasts; at other times the *Religious* were bound to fast until three o'clock on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*: the twelve days in *Christmas* were excepted in this Canon.

Every day in *Lent* they were enjoined to fast until six in the evening. During this solemnity they retrenched their refreshments, and came to abatements in sleep and eating, and spent more time in their devotions; however they were not to go into any voluntary austerities without leave from the abbot.

They were not allowed to talk in the refectory at meals; but were to hearken to the scriptures read to them at that time.

The *Septimarians* were to dine by themselves after the rest. These *Septimarians* were so called, because their office continued but a week, such as the reader, waiters, cook, &c.

Those who were absent about business had the same hours of prayer prescribed them, though (it may be) not obliged to the same length of devotion.

Those sent abroad, and expecting to return at night, were forbidden to eat until they came home; but this Canon was sometimes dispensed with.

The *Compline* was to be solemnly sung about seven at night. The service concluded with this verse,—"Set a watch, O Lord, before my "mouth, and keep the door of my lips." After the *Compline*, they were not allowed to talk, but to go to bed immediately; they were all to sleep in the same dormitory, but not two in a bed;—they lay in their clothes. Small faults only put them from the table, but for greater, they were barred religious commerce, or excluded the *Chapel*, and here, none was to converse with any person excommunicated, under the penalty of the same *Censure*. Incorrigible criminals were expelled the monasteries.

When a *Brother* was received after expulsion, he lost his seniority, and was placed the last in the *Convent*.

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"Cratendune Field," but the exact situation is not discoverable. Etheldreda gave the whole island to her monastery, and obtained from pope Benedict great immunities and privileges for the new establishment. However these institutions might afterwards degenerate, we must acknowledge that to the monasteries of old we are highly indebted for many useful arts and improvements; they may indeed be considered as colleges under another name, and we should form unjust ideas of them in general, if we relied solely on the report of those concerned in their dissolution. In their early state they were undoubtedly seminaries, as well for acquiring the finer arts, as for inculcating good morals and christian instructions, and it has been observed, that had not the monks bestowed the pains of copying books, the learning of the ancients would have been lost for ever.* Etheldreda, having accomplished the
A.D. foundation, was made abbess, and seven years after
679. departed this life on 9th July A.D. 679, the holy man Huna celebrating the funeral; soon after her death, he withdrew to a little island not far from Ely, founded a church there, and lived in great solitude, the same being thereupon called Huneye.† The monastery flourished with great honour, and its inmates remained
870. in peace and security for many years, until 870, when the Danes,‡ whose object was plunder and the spoliation

* Those who were so disposed were furnished with conveniences for life and study; the abbies were very serviceable places for the education of young people; every convent had one person or more assigned for this business. To the abbies we are obliged for most of our historians, both of church and state.—*Collier's Eccles. Hist.*

† Honey Farm, in Chatteris, is called after this ancient priest Huna, to which place he is supposed to have retired.

‡ The three islands of Ely, Thanet, and Sheppy, which were chosen for the purposes of solitude and contemplation, because of their supposed

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of the country, having made an invasion in this part of the realm, discovered this place of retirement, and such was their inhumanity, that after having ransacked the church of Ely of all its ornaments and wealth, they turned out the defenceless nuns, and burnt the buildings to the ground: they next proceeded to the destruction of the abbeys of Crowland, Thorney, Ramsey, and Medehamstead, as well as of many other places in the neighbourhood.

Certain priests then possessed themselves of the revenues of this religious foundation, until the first year of Edgar,* when Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, the king's confessor, purchased the whole district of the isle of Ely of the king, with the privilege, "that it "should ever be free from any regal tribute or ex- "action;" and, with other concessions, the king added forty hides of land in the town of Hatfield; and having so done, Ethelwold, after having established a certain number of monks there, constituted Brythnod, provost of Winchester, the first abbot thereof, who exerted himself to complete the repairs of the conventual church. This afterwards became one of the most splendid, as its remains are now one of the most curious monuments of ecclesiastical antiquity in this kingdom. A.D. 969.

security through their insular situation, became the means of exposing them the more to the horrid plunder and devastation of the Danes, whom no distress could move, or treaties bind. The Danes, after obtaining a settlement here, chiefly inhabited the north of England, and the Saxons the south. The dread of the cruelties exercised by the Danes is said to have continued upon the mind for ages, in the northern parts.

* King Edgar was a great friend to monasteries;—he built and re-edified many abbeys; he also revived the naval glory of England, and is said to have been rowed down the river Dee by eight kings, his vassals.

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A.D. 976. Abbot Brithnod* first set forth the limits of the isle, assisted by Leo, a monk, and for a perpetual evidence of the possessions belonging to his church, caused a deep ditch to be cut through the main body of the fen, called Abbot's Delf, to remain as a boundary between the respective possessions.† This monastery was largely

* Abbot Brithnod is said to have been slain by the orders of Elfrida, queen dowager of king Edgar. There was also a duke Brithnoth, a nobleman of the first rank in the court of king Edgar, who was particularly liberal to the church of Ely. Bentham, p. 85. Brithnoth was duke of Northumberland, and sometimes called Alderman; he fell in an engagement with the Danish invaders, A. D. 991. Among the MSS. in the Cottonian library, is a fragment on the death of Brithnoth, in Anglo-Saxon poetry, distinguished by great spirit and eloquence. The poem is in praise of the warlike exploits and death of this nobleman. The title of duke was, in reality, first brought into England by king Edward III. who created his eldest son, duke of Cornwall. For though we find in Latin historians the word "Dux" used, and many "Duces" slain in the Danish invasion, yet they were not dukes, but governors of provinces.

† The isle of Ely, strictly speaking, is that large tract of high ground, (of which the city of Ely is the principal place, and gives name to the whole) — in which are included the villages of Stretham and Thetford, Wilburton, Haddenham, Sutton, Mepal, Manea, Witcham, Wentworth, Witchford, Downham, and Chettisham, making collectively but one island. Littleport, Coveney, and Stuntney, (though sometimes reckoned part of it) were, in their original state, disjointed by small intervals of the fenny ground, and, therefore, were distinct islands of themselves; but the three hundreds belonging to the isle extend from the bridge at Tid St. Giles, on the north, to Upware, below Stretham Mere, on the south, twenty-eight miles in length; and from Abbot's Delf, near Soham, (where the Delf bridge was re-built by the dean and chapter of Ely in 1765) on the east, to the river Nene, beyond Whittlesey, on the west, twenty-five miles in breadth. This whole district includes (besides the isle of Ely, properly so called) several considerable towns and villages, as Wisbech, March, Chatteris, Doddington, Elm, Outwell, Upwell, Welney, Whittlesey, Thorney, Leverington, Newton, Tid St. Giles, &c. the whole whereof is now called the Isle of Ely, and is, as a county palatine, subject to the lord bishop of Ely.

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endowed with lands by the abbot Brithnod, and otherwise richly beautified through the bounty of many zealous people; multitudes, for devotion's sake, flocked hither, and king Canute, with his queen Emma, kept A.D. the feast of the purification at Ely, and as there was 1030. no other access but by shipping, he accordingly set sail thitherward, where, being received with solemn procession, and brought into the church, he ratified all the donations, before those present, which had been conferred by his royal predecessors, kings of England, with their immunities, upon the high altar; which privileges were again confirmed by Edward the Confessor, who is said to have received the early part of his education here. This place was considered so secure, by reason of the vast and deep waters wherein it was situated, that in the time of Edward the Confessor, when the Danes threatened another invasion, treasures were sent here for protection; but the most signal testimony of the strength of this place, on account of the said waters encompassing it, is, that during the confusion occasioned by the Norman invasion, divers 1066. of the principal nobility of the English nation made this place their greatest refuge against the strength and power of the Norman conqueror, and were able, for a considerable time, to hold out a defence against a most powerful army brought for subduing it.

Its Defence against William the Conqueror.

Notwithstanding that William, duke of Normandy, had gained his great and decisive victory of Hastings, some steps were taken by the English towards adjusting their disjointed government, and uniting themselves against the common enemy. Two potent earls, Edwin

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and Morcar, who had fled to London, with the remainder of their broken army, took the lead on the occasion; in concert with Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, they proclaimed Edgar Atheling, the only heir of the Saxon line, to be king.* However, the two earls, despairing of making any effectual resistance, retired with their troops to their own provinces, and as soon as William passed the Thames, Stigand made submission, and Edgar Atheling, who was ill qualified to govern, yielded to his authority. Still discontents and secret conspiracies multiplied in various parts against the new government. Thurstan, the seventh abbot of Ely, willing to support the interest of Edgar Atheling, gave assistance and shelter to several English lords, determined to defend their country against one whom they regarded as an usurper, and the natural strength of this isle was supposed capable of resisting the progress of William's army; Stigand also, being looked upon with a jealous eye by the Conqueror, afterwards fled into the isle for safety, so likewise did Egfrid, abbot of St. Alban's, with the treasures of his church, also the earls Edwin and Morcar, with Edelwine, bishop of Durham, besides many thousands of the clergy and laity. The noblemen understanding that Hereward, lord of Brunne,† in Lincolnshire, (youngest son of Leofric, earl of Mercia,) a person renowned for valour and military skill, was returned from abroad, whither he had been banished, sent for him to join in the defence of their native country; with which request Hereward willingly complied, and was received with great honor, as well by the abbot and his monks, as by the noble persons there, viz. Edwin, and Morcar, his brother,

* Hume. † Bourn, in Lincolnshire.

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with the earl of Warwick, and other eminent men, who, having been much oppressed by the Conqueror, had fled thither.*

When king William was informed thereof, he resolved to obtain the isle by assault, and thereupon caused a rendezvous of his whole army at Alrehede,† but he could make no impression on the isle, and having sustained several disasters, departed with little or no hope of conquering it.

Many noble exploits were performed by Hereward during the siege, who beat his adversaries, and deluded them so often, that he obtained lasting renown by sustaining the tottering ruins of the country.

How the King obtained Possession thereof.

The king, observing that all his endeavours to conquer the isle by force were frustrated by the obstinate valour of its defenders; having lost many men in the attempt, and considering, as he wanted to go into Normandy, it would be unsafe to leave such an enemy behind him, had recourse to other expedients, and even manifested a willingness to make terms with an enemy whom he could not overcome by arms. At length, by the counsel of William, bishop of Hereford, and others, the king came to a determination, that all the estates, manors,

* Holinshed (p. 10) mentions the English nobility, with Hereward, taking refuge in the isle of Elie, to defend themselves from the injuries of the Normans.

† Called Audreth at this present day, near which there is a military rampire still to be seen. Dugdale, p. 186.

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and possessions belonging to the abbey, which lay without the compass of the isle, should be seized on and divided amongst his soldiers, who would thereby be excited to more than ordinary diligence: the monks having knowledge of this, consulted with their abbot, and resolved not only to yield peaceably to the king, in case he would honourably restore them all the manors and lands belonging to their church, but to give him one thousand marks; and accordingly, without the knowledge of the noble Hereward, made that tender to the king at Warwick, who received the proposal with approbation. Hereward, being informed of this step, at first, in his rage, resolved to set fire to the church and town, but desisted at the earnest prayer of the
A.D. monks; still, refusing himself to submit, he left the
1073. isle,* it being the seventh year of his holding of the same against the king.

After the Surrender of the Isle to the King, how it became a Bishoprick, and how the Conventual Church was afterwards converted into a Cathedral by Henry VIII.

1073. King William, having now got possession of the isle, in order to protect himself from the like annoyance from the same quarter in future, compelled the abbot to

* Though it is said that Hereward never ceased to concert hostile measures against the Conqueror, still he had not only the singular fortune to escape death or imprisonment in these turbulent times, but, which is more remarkable, it appears that his estates descended to his heirs; for his only daughter and heir married Hugh de Evermore, lord of Deeping, in Lincolnshire, from whom the great lordship of Brunne (Hereward's patrimony) descended by female heirs, to the families of Rulton, Fitz-Gilbert, and Wake.

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maintain a force of forty soldiers* for its security, who had their constant diet in his hall, as also daily pay at the hands of the cellarer, and he likewise caused a castle to be built AT WISBECH,† to overawe and control that part of the country. A monk named Godfrey having, a few years after the surrender, acquired the administration of the abbey, had sufficient influence with king William to obtain a charter, and get the same confirmed, for putting the church of Ely "in possession of all the "royalties, rights, and privileges which it enjoyed at "king Edward's death." With these renewed privileges, riches in great abundance soon flowed in,‡ and the college festivals and solemn holidays were celebrated

* This circumstance was commemorated by an ancient painting to be seen in the deanery, known as Tabula Eliensis. There are few pieces of English antiquity that have afforded more amusement to the curious, than the representation given to certain knights and monks of Ely in this painting; several copies have been published—one is at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; and in Bentham's Ely, p. 106, is a representation of this Tabula. It appears that the knights and gentlemen there represented were some of the principal officers in William's army, and of families making the greatest figure at that time, their descendants still bearing the same arms. The difficulty is to determine at what time these arms were first put up in the common hall of the monastery. It was usual with the king to quarter his soldiers on the monasteries in many places in the kingdom, before knights' service was fixed: on William taking the isle by force, he went to the monastery, and the abbot and monks being under his displeasure, he placed therein a sufficient number of soldiers to keep the monks in awe, and afterwards the monastery was fixed by the knights' service to find forty soldiers.

† Matthew Paris mentions the forces under Hereward, and William's surrounding the isle with an army and building a castle, in the following words:—"Castellum in loco qui Wiseberum dicitur, a fundamentis erexit. "Quod cum adversarii ejus cognovissent, omnes præter solumHerewardum, "ad manus venientes, Wilielmo esse presentarunt quod libet supplicium "subituri."

‡ So rich was the monastery, that the abbot was said to lay up every year in his own purse fourteen hundred marks.

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after this time with such sumptuous provision and stately pomp, that they are said "to have wonne the "praise and prize from all the abbeys in England;" whereupon a poet of that age wrote these verses:

Prævisis aliis Eliensia festa videre,
Est quasi prævisa nocte videre diem.

See, after other, Ely feasts, and surely thou wilt say,
That, having seen the night before, thou seest now the day.

A.D. 1081. When Godfrey was removed to Malmsbury, Simeon, brother to the bishop of Winchester, was appointed to the abbacy, and soon after his promotion, laid the foundation of the present magnificent and stupendous structure, which is to be considered as one of the oldest and most elaborate remains of antiquity now existing in this island, containing a complete system of architectural and sculptural taste, and displaying a singular intermixture of the Saxon, Norman, and Gothic styles of building.* Richard, the successor of Simeon, prosecuted the structure with diligence; he was son of earl Gislebert, and the last abbot; and his revenues being so considerable,† that he could not endure to live

* The very able and interesting History of this noble edifice, by James Bentham, M. A. minor canon of Ely, and the Supplement to that work, published in 1817, by Stevenson, Matchett, and Stevenson, of Norwich, are too well known to require any other notice than the mere mention of these invaluable works. To them may be added, a judicious treatise on the same inexhaustible subject, by the Rev. G. Millers, minor canon of Ely; a volume of less pretensions, but written in a pleasing style, and illustrated by engravings of singular clearness and beauty.

† The annual revenues of the abbey are said to have amounted at this time to £1,400. It is calculated that in the time of William the Conqueror, such sum was equivalent to twelve times the amount in 1826; in the time of Henry VIII. it would be equal to five times.

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under the bishop of Lincoln, (to whose diocese the isle of Ely and Cambridgeshire then belonged) he suggested to king Henry I. that this would be a fit place for an EPISCOPAL SEE; and having procured the pope's consent, he obtained that also of the king, hoping to have been the first bishop of this new diocese; but he did not live to taste the sweets of his industry and ambition. The king, nevertheless, completed his design of erecting the abbey into a see, and having bestowed the manors of Spaldwicke, Bricklesworth, and Buckden upon the bishop of Lincoln, in recompense for the loss which the said bishop sustained by exempting the county of Cambridge from his jurisdiction, he made Harvey,* bishop of Bangor, in Wales, the FIRST BISHOP OF ELY; and that the revenues of the bishoprick might afford him honourable support, he assigned a part of the profits of the abbey to the new see, and reduced the number of monks from seventy to forty.

The abbey being now converted into a conventual church, Henry I. immediately afterwards granted a charter, by which he allowed that the church of Ely should continue to have the same privileges and liberties as it had, "Die quâ Edwardus vivus et mortuus fuit;" and the bishops, in place of the abbots, were considered as invested with the temporal jurisdiction of the isle.† At that time there was not any other access to the

* Harvey was driven from his see of Bangor by the tumultuous Welsh, but finding favor with the king, was preferred to Ely, which is the only abbey that was converted into a see:— "Rex Henricus Abbatiam Eliensis "in episcopalem sedem commutavit." Matthew of Westminster, p. 143. lib. ii.

† Bishops were before monks in most places, but in the county of Cambridge monks were before bishops. In the cathedral, the bishop occupies what was the abbot's seat, and the dean that of the prior.

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isle than by ships and boats; this bishop, therefore,
A.D. being desirous of having a way or road through the fen,
1133. made that causeway which still retains the name of "Soham Causey." To Harvey succeeded Nigellus, who, having joined in the rebellion against king Stephen, and discerning the isle to be a place of great security, made a strong fort within the precinct thereof at Ely,* and another at Audrey.

1216. In the war between king John and his barons, the isle was doomed again to desolation;† the monasteries were plundered, and great sums of money extorted from the monks.‡

1256. Matthew Paris § mentions an agreement taking place this year, between William, bishop of Ely, and Hugh, abbot of Ramsey, respecting certain boundaries of the fens, which, he says, in former times, were inaccessible; without men or cattle, and overrun with reeds; but now converted into delightful meadows and arable lands.

* There are no vestiges of this castle remaining, but there is a certain district of the city of Ely known by the name of *Castle Ward*:—probably the high artificial mount on the south side of the cathedral might have been the keep of the fort.

† Matthew Paris, p. 193.

‡ Divers knights, ladies, and gentlemen fled out of the towns, and withdrew into the isle of Elie, when the army of king John followed and besieged them, and by reason of the waters in the fens and ditches being frozen, they found means to enter, and spoiled it from side to side, together with the cathedral church, carrying from thence on their departure a marvellous great prey of goods and chattels. Holinshed, vol. iii. p. 190.

§ He was a Benedictine monk of St. Alban's, and flourished in the thirteenth century, and is represented to have been one of the most learned men of the age, being an able mathematician, architect, poet, orator, and historian:—he died A.D. 1239.

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In the troublesome times of Henry III. Ely was the chief scene of civil discord; the rebellious barons took possession of the isle, established themselves therein, and fortified it on every side. The king came to Cambridge,* and was there joined by prince Edward, who brought him a strong reinforcement, and effected the capture of the whole district without much opposition, the barons attempting no further resistance. There are few historical events connected with the isle after this period; but we cannot help noticing a remark of Holinshed, who observes, that when the duke of Buckingham resolved to assist in deposing king Richard III. and to prefer the earl of Richmond to the crown, bishop Morton, who was then confined in Brecknock castle, was consulted, when he told the duke, "that "if he was in his isle of Ely, and had but four days "warning, he little regarded the malice of king "Richard, his countrie was so strong." After the surrender of the monastery to king Henry VIII. that monarch, by his letters patent, granted a charter for erecting the conventual church of the monastery into a cathedral, by the title of "The Cathedral Church "of the holy and undivided Trinity of Ely;" to consist of one dean and eight prebendaries, with other ministers necessary for celebrating divine service therein; and ordained that the cathedral church should be the episcopal see of the bishop of Ely and his successors, with all usual honours and privileges;† and that the dean and

A.D. 1265. 1484. 1540.

* The king lay at Cambridge to defend the counties about from injuries daily attempted by them that held the isle of Ely against him. Holinshed, vol. iii. p. 273.

† This see has given two Saints and two Cardinals to the church of Rome; and to the English nation, nine lord Chancellors, seven lord Treasurers, one lord Privy-Seal, one Chancellor of the Exchequer, one Chancellor to the University of Oxford, three Masters of the Rolls, and three Almoners.

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prebendaries should be one body corporate, and be the chapter of the bishop of Ely and his successors, and be called, "The Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral "Church of the holy and undivided Trinity of Ely."

A.D. 1568. Lesley, bishop of Ross, in Scotland, was sent a prisoner to the isle of Ely, probably to Wisbech castle, and then to the tower. His services to queen Mary had recommended him to the see of Ross. Upon Mary's flight into England, he ably defended her, and afterwards went to London as her embassador. The measures he pursued to procure her liberty, by a marriage with the duke of Norfolk, proved offensive to queen Elizabeth, but he, nevertheless, in 1573 obtained his release.

1640. In the time of Charles I. whilst the commons were pursuing their project of church reformation, they drew up an impeachment against Wren, bishop of Ely, digested into twenty-five articles. The substance of the articles amounted to no more than that the bishop pressed conformity, and exerted the discipline of the church. The bishop was committed to the tower, but the prosecution was afterwards dropped.

On Counties Palatine and Franchises, and particularly of that of Ely.

Although our sovereign lord the king is undoubtedly supreme head both of our church and state, and all the lands therein are holden of him as "Dominus Superior" thereof, yet, by the indulgence of his majesty's royal progenitors, and under their grants, confirmed or acknowledged by parliament, several of his majesty's subjects do still enjoy certain "jura regalia," notwithstanding their powers have been diminished by the

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various revolutions in the state, and the statute 27th Henry VIII. "for re-continuing Liberties in the Crown." This statute, though it deprived those subjects of their almost regal power, such as pardoning felonies, coining money, &c. yet still left them peculiar privileges. Before this act was introduced, some few great men, from the earliest ages, had retained or obtained the highest marks, and exercised the ultimate acts of sovereignty, such as holding their parliaments, appointing their chancellors and judges, and remitting penalties; and the few *comites* we read of at the time of the Roman invasion may probably have been a sort of petty sovereigns. Thus William I. created William Lupus, his sister's son, earl of Chester; "totumque istum "comitatum tenendum sibi et heredibus suis, ita libere "ad gladum sicut ipse rex tenebat Angliam ad coronam, "dedit:" by which grant, says lord Coke, that earl had "jura regalia" within that county; and, consequently, had "comitatum palatinum,"—a parliament and peers, with other great officers, as chancellor and judges thereto belonging, without any express words thereof.*

King Edgar endowed the monastery of Ely with large possessions, and by a charter granted to it the temporal jurisdiction through the isle.† This charter (afterwards confirmed by Edward the Confessor, and again by William I. and Henry I.) has always been considered as the foundation, and is the ground of that temporal jurisdiction which the monastery of Ely continued to exercise

* Nicholls' Account of the Gentleman's Society at Spalding.

† King Edgar's charter is dated in the thirteenth year of his reign, A. D. 970. *Bentham's Ely*, p. 73.

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from the time it was re-founded, until the bishoprick was erected, and which has from that time been vested in, and is at this day enjoyed by the bishop of the diocese.

The franchise of Ely is one of the most ancient of the kind in the whole kingdom, and may be traced back as far as the seventh century; and as it is probably the most ancient, so does it contain a large district, and has more powers and privileges belonging to it than any other franchise, except that of the bishop of Durham.*

The isle of Ely, as a franchise belonging to the lord bishop, has a jurisdiction within itself, distinct from that of the county, in which it is locally situated, in civil as well as in criminal matters. A general assize of oyer and terminer and gaol delivery, and a court of pleas for the trial of civil actions to any amount, (as at nisi prius in the superior courts) are held twice, and sessions four times a year, at Ely and Wisbech alternately. Agreeably to the statute 27th Henry VIII. cap. 24, above mentioned, justices of oyer and terminer and gaol delivery, and justices of the peace for the isle of Ely, are now made by letters patent under the great seal, and all writs run in the king's name, tested in that of the bishop, as lord of the franchise. And by the act referred to, it is provided and enacted, that the bishops of Ely, and "their temporal steward of the isle "for the time being, are to be justices of the peace "within the said isle, in as ample and large manner as "any other justices of the peace in any other county."

* Appendix to Beatham's Ely, p. 25.

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There is no connexion between the isle and county at large, as to their public rates, the inhabitants within the isle not contributing to the rates for that part of the county which is beyond the limits of the isle, nor such part of the county to the isle, which has its own treasurers, with the sole application of its own public monies. The juries, as well in criminal as in civil cases, are summoned by the chief bailiff,* (who alone has that power within the isle) from the inhabitants of the isle only; and such inhabitants are not liable to serve, nor ever do serve as jurors for the county at large, either at the assizes or the sessions. It has also its own gaol and houses of correction. The chief justice and chief bailiff, as well as the other officers, are appointed by the bishop. The office of chief bailiff is one of considerable importance, being equivalent in the isle to that of high sheriff of a county, and he does every act which a sheriff of a county performs, except that he does not account before the barons of the exchequer, and his appointment is pro termino vitæ. The gaol is supported at the sole expense of the bishop, but the charge of maintaining the houses of correction is paid out of the isle rates.

The present Officers of the Isle are as under:

Henry Storks, Esq. *Chief Justice.*
William Watson, Esq. *Chief Bailiff.*
Mr. John Wing, *Deputy.*

* He was anciently called "Senescallus Insulæ Eliensis." The office has been held by persons of the first respectability, several of the bishops having appointed their sons or brothers to it; and it is understood to be the same office which is called by the act 27th Henry VIII. "Temporal "Steward of the Isle of Ely."

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Hugh Jackson, Esq. *Clerk of Assize and of the Peace,**

Hugh Robert Evans, } *Coroners.*
William Pratt, }

Hugh Robert Evans, Esq. } *Treasurers.*
Hugh Jackson, Esq. }

Robert Edwards, }
Thomas Newitt, }
William Squier, } *Chief Constables.*
James Custance, }

Rev. John Griffith, *Chaplain for the Gaol at Ely.*

——George Millers, *Chaplain for the House of Correction at Ely.*

——Jeremiah Jackson, *Chaplain for ditto at Wisbech.*

Benjamin Barlow, *Keeper of the Gaol.*

* This gentleman succeeded James Bellamy, Esq. the late clerk of assize and of the peace, at Michaelmas sessions, 1826; the duties of which office were discharged by his deputy, Steed Girdlestone, Esq. for twenty-five years, with integrity, faithfulness, and ability; and, I have pleasure in adding, with the unqualified approbation of every acting magistrate in the Isle. Upon his retirement, the following testimonial of respect was paid to him.

"Isle of Ely, 20th November, 1826.

"The Chief Justice, Acting Magistrates of the Isle, and Barristers "attending the Assizes and Sessions there, are desirous of affording a "memorial of the high sense they entertain of the public conduct of "Steed Girdlestone, Esq. the late Deputy Clerk of the Peace for "this Isle, the duties of which office he performed for a quarter of a "century, with so much honour, integrity, and talent, as to gain universal "respect and approbation.

"Although, by the decease of the late Clerk of the Peace, the services "of Mr. Girdlestone will not any longer be continued, they cannot allow "him to retire from the responsible duties of his office without some ex-"pression of their regard for the able and faithful manner in which he so "long discharged its important duties; and accordingly propose that a "PIECE OF PLATE be purchased, as a permanent record of the esteem "with which they have viewed his meritorious conduct.

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Robert Scott, *Keeper of the House of Correction at Ely.*
Samuel Cradock, *Keeper of ditto at Wisbech.*
Billett Genn, Daniel Brown Witham, } *Bailiffs of the Isle.*

"We, therefore, agree to subscribe the sum of *Two Guineas*, as set "opposite to our respective names, to be laid out in the purchase of a Piece "of Plate of such description as the subscribers shall think proper.

	£.	s.	d.
"The Chief Justice of the Isle	2	2	0
"The Very Rev. Dr. Wood, Dean of Ely	2	2	0
"Rev. G. L. Jenyns..	2	2	0
"Rev. J. H. Sparke..	2	2	0
"Rev. H. Fardell ..	2	2	0
"Rev. Dr. Jobson ..	2	2	0
"Rev. Dr. Chatfield ..	2	2	0
"Rev. A. Peyton....	2	2	0
"W. D. Gardner, Esq.	2	2	0
"Dr. Hardwicke	2	2	0
"William Watson, Esq.	2	2	0
"Rev. W. Hardwicke	2	2	0
"Thomas Orton, Esq.	2	2	0
"H. J. Nicholls, Esq.	2	2	0
"J. T. Dering, Esq.	2	2	0
"Rev. J. Wing	2	2	0
"Tycho Wing, Esq.	2	2	0
"Rev. T. C. W. Seymour..	2	2	0
"Rev. J. T. Cook	2	2	0
"J. D. Merest, Esq.	2	2	0
"Thomas Bowker, Esq. ..	2	2	0
"Jonathan Page, Esq.	2	2	0
"George Pryme, Esq.	2	2	0
"Lewis Flanaghan, Esq. ..	2	2	0
"Charles Jenyns, Esq.	2	2	0

"Agreeable to the above resolution, the committee gave orders for the "purchase of a Piece of Plate, with the following inscription to be en- "graved thereon:—

"'IN THE YEAR 1827,
"PRESENTED BY
"THE CHIEF JUSTICE, ACTING MAGISTRATES, AND BARRISTERS OF THE
"ISLE OF ELY,
"To STEED GIRDLESTONE, Esquire,
"AS AN UNANIMOUS EXPRESSION OF RESPECT FOR HIS VERY ABLE AND
"FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF THE DUTIES OF DEPUTY CLERK OF
"ASSIZE AND OF THE PEACE FOR THE ISLE,
"DURING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.'"

Which piece of plate was accordingly presented to Mr. Girdlestone at a public dinner in Wisbech, by the Rev. Algernon Peyton, who consented to take the chair on that occasion.

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The present State of the Isle.

It has been shewn that the isle of Ely was, at one period, in a desolate state, being frequently inundated by the upland waters, and destitute of adequate means of drainage; the lower parts became a wilderness of stagnant pools, the exhalations from which loaded the air with pestiferous vapours and fogs. Now, by the improvements which have from time to time been made, and particularly within the last fifty years, an alteration has taken place which may appear to be the effect of magic. By the labour, industry, and spirit of the inhabitants, a forlorn waste has been converted into pleasant and fertile pastures, and they themselves have been rewarded by bounteous harvests. Drainage, embankments, engines,* and inclosures have given stability to the soil, (which in its nature is rich as the Delta of Egypt) as well as salubrity to the air.† These very considerable improvements, though carried on at a great expense, have at last turned to a double account, both in reclaiming much ground and improving the rest, and in contributing to the healthiness of the inhabitants. The pastures feed vast herds of cattle,‡ and the numerous lakes, rivers, and watercourses which pervade the fens,

* In drainage, windmills are employed to raise the water from the low lands, and deliver it into the rivers and drains; but a great improvement upon this method has been recently introduced, by the substitution of steam power for the very uncertain power of wind, as it often happens that when there is most rain, there is least wind, and the wind machines are useless at the time when most wanted.

† The same has been said of the fens in Lincolnshire.

‡ The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing. Psalm lxv. v. 13.

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abound in fish and wild fowl,* and give the inhabitants an easy communication with several counties, as well as with the sea, thereby affording a brisk and continually increasing trade. Works of modern refinement have given a totally different face and character to this once neglected spot. Much has been performed,—much yet remains to be accomplished by the rising generation. The population of the isle, which increases yearly, is about 46,000, independent of the county. In the contested election in 1802, the number polled was 3,092, of which near 1,400 were from the isle, and the rest from the county.

The Chief or High Bailiffs of the Isle of Ely, whose Names are to be found on Record.

When appointed. A.D.	The names.	By whom appointed.
1294	Robert de Scadeworth†	
	Roger Abynton..	
1308	Ralph de Norwich.	
1329	John Bosse.‡	
1445	Roger Davy, ...	Bishop Bourgchier.§
1459	John Ansty.	
	John Mesanger.	
1468	William Curson.....	Bishop Gray.
	William Michell.	
	Matthew Christian.	
	Jordan de Daventre.	

* Fish, such as pike, perch, dace, bream, eels, &c. are found in abundance, and a fish called stickleback, which comes in such numbers as to be used for manure. The following birds inhabit the fens: the duck, mallard, teal, widgeon, water hen, wild swan, heron, snipe, wild goose, pewit, water rail, bittern, besides ruffs, &c.

† See Dugdale, p. 247. ‡ Ibid. p. 303.

§ He was great-grandson to king Edward III.

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When appointed. A.D.	The names.	By whom appointed.
1501	John Burgoyne.	
1516	Edmund Wyngfield.	Bishop West.
	Thomas de Inglethorpe.	
1546	Thomas Meggs.	
	Sir John Huddlestone.	
1600	Thomas Heton, brother to	Bishop Heton.
	Thomas Edwards, Esq.	
1661	Wm. Wren, Esq. brother to	Bishop Wren.
1698	Thomas Edwards, Jun. ..	Bishop Patrick.
1725	Charles Clarke, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn.	Bishop Green.
1726	Edward Parthericke, Esq.*	Ditto.
1749	Thomas Gooch, Esq. eldest son of.....	Bishop Gooch.
1753	Francis Wyatt, Esq.	Ditto.
1770	William Ward, Esq. of Staple's Inn	Bishop Mawson.
1783	Thomas Gotobed, Esq. ..	Bishop Yorke.
1791	Francis Bagge, Esq.	Ditto.
1822	Wm. Watson, Esq. F.A.S.†	Bishop Sparke.

* He was lord of the manor of Littleport, which he sold to lord Chancellor Hardwicke. The Partherickes had been in possession of the manor near a century.

† The compiler feels happy in this opportunity of acknowledging the high sense he entertains of the gracious manner in which his lordship was pleased to confer upon him this ancient and honourable office, unsolicited as it was, and on his part in every way unexpected.

We now come to the *third head*, which constitutes our main design:—An Account of the Ancient and Present State of the Town of Wisbech.

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THE ANCIENT AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

TOWN OF WISBECH.

PREVIOUSLY to the final departure of the Romans, it is supposed that they built many forts for the protection of the eastern and southern coasts of the island. Tacitus mentions that Publius Ostorius erected a chain of forts from the Nene to the Severn;* and when we consider how important the Nene must have been whilst the Ouse discharged its waters by the same channel, it is not probable that a shrewd people like the Romans would leave a barrier of such consequence undefended. A fort is said to have been erected at Boston, (supposed by some to be the site of the Roman station Causennæ of Antoninus) and Dr. Stukeley† conjectures

* Cinctosq. Castris Antonam et Sabrinam Fluvios, &c. vol. ii. annal. lib. 12.

† Dr. Stukeley was a means of reviving the Royal Society of Antiquarians in 1717, of which Camden was one of the founders in the reign of Elizabeth. The doctor, writing to Mr. Gale in 1727, about "Roman Stations," says, the Hermen Way all along accompanying Durobrivæ, (now Castor, near Peterborough) ought to be fixed at the water of the river Anton or Nen,

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that there were similar ones at Wisbech and Spalding.* A proof that some of the Roman colonies were settled in these parts may be deduced from the testimony of the urns, coins, &c. dug up.† Beaupré Bell, Esq. in his letters published in Bib. Top. dated 1730, gives the description of the pipes of a Roman aqueduct found at Wisbech, besides several other Roman antiquities in the neighbourhood. The name which the banks in the vicinity of Wisbech have invariably born for centuries seems to point out the people by whom they were constructed, having been immemorially, and being still called "the Roman Banks;" they are formed of a large, high, and firm structure, calculated to guard the low lands from the ocean. Dugdale also remarks, that in cutting some drains through the adjacent fens, divers urns were dug up, one on the north side of

where there is a great remnant of a city, (Chesterton, near Castor) that has had a very large ditch about it, and perhaps a wall, and where the Herman Street passes the river;—this I take to have originally sprung from one of the forts built along the river, to the head of it and the Severn, as Tacitus informs us, by Ostorius. In making the turnpike road from Ket's Cabin to Wansford, innumerable urns and coins were found, several stone coffins were dug up, all of which had skeletons in them; in one was a coin of Antoninus Pius. *Bib. Top. Brit. Linc. Antiq.* vol. i.

There were four remarkable Roman ways in England:—the first, Watling Street, from Dover to London, &c.; the second, Ikenild Street before mentioned, (page 4); the third, Fosse Way, so called because in some places it was never perfected, but lay as a ditch, leading from Cornwall to Lincoln; and the fourth, Hermen, or Irming Street above mentioned. Roman roads never deviated from a straight line, except where nature opposed some impediment.

* Thompson's History of Boston.

† For antiquities and Roman bricks found at Walpole, see p. 11. And for coins, urns, &c. discovered in various other parts in the neighbourhood of Wisbech, see the description of those towns where they were dug up and found, such as at Newton, Elm, March, Chatteris, Doddington, &c.

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Wisbech, and another about Peakirk.* In an attempt to trace the origin of towns, we are generally involved in conjecture, but the history of few places can be carried to a more remote period than the one we are treating of. We know the point of junction of two rivers, with a rich fruitful soil, would soon induce people to collect together in a situation of that kind. Such a settlement, first forming a village, would progressively enlarge itself.

Wisbech seems to have been very well known in the seventh century, as in a charter of Wulphere's, (son of Peada, king of the Mercians) granted to the abbey of Medehamstead,† A. D. 664, it is thus recorded in the Saxon chronicle:‡ "I give to day to St. Peter and the "abbot Saxulph and monks of the minster, these lands, "these waters and meres, and fens and wiers, that are "of my kingdom freely, so that no man have there any "egress but the abbot and the monks: this is the gift;— "From Medehamstead to Nasboro, &c. from Ragwell "five miles, to the main river that goeth to Elm and "to Wisbece, and so about three miles to Trokenholt, "&c." § Which record brings the notice of Wisbech very near to the time of the departure of the Romans. Many larger towns are satisfied to find themselves first recorded in the register of Domesday, but we go between four and five centuries further back. Leland, in his Itinerary, seems to have avoided this country, but

* A. D. 1658. Dugdale, p. 174.

† Now Peterborough.

‡ A learned lady, Miss Gurney, of Keswick, Norfolk, has the honour of having printed the first literal version of the Saxon Annals.

§ See title,—Leverington, in the account of the adjacent villages.

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the possession of Walpole by the church of Ely,* as a place of note at an early period, may be considered another proof of the existence of such towns in the neighbourhood. Further, in Camden's Britannia, to which a map of the island of Great Britain is annexed, (entitled Britannia Saxonica) there will be found among the few places thereon delineated, a Saxon town named "Virebec," in English, "Visebec," or "Wisebec," situated at the mouth of the Metaris Æstuarium. This circumstance, whilst it affords testimony of antiquity,

* Ely manor, in Walpole, was for some centuries vested in the see of Ely, and continued so until the bishoprick of Dr. Cox, A. D. 1559, when it came to the crown. On bishop Cox's translation to this see, several estates were alienated therefrom, for which, however, he was in no wise blamable; for in 1st Elizabeth, cap. 19, an act passed, "giving authority to the queen, "upon the avoidance of any archbishoprick or bishoprick, to take into her "hands certain of the temporal possessions thereof, recompensing the same "with parsonages impropriate and tenths." The censure, therefore, passed on many of the bishops in that reign, for giving up the ancient possessions of their churches, to the detriment of their successors, seems to be without foundation, for it was not in their power to prevent it. With respect to bishop Cox's alienations, (as they are called) it cannot be said he was easily wrought upon. These manors were not, in truth, voluntarily given up, but kept in the queen's hands by virtue of the above act, and the bishop was *obliged* to receive whatever the queen's commissioners thought fit to give in exchange, out of the tenths then in possession of the crown. Amongst many other manors taken away from the church of Ely at that time, were the manors of *Walpole*, *Terrington*, and *West Walton*. Charges have been brought both against bishop Cox, and his successor, bishop Heton, of alienating the estates of the church; but their compliance with the queen's commands will further appear to be the effect rather of compulsion than inclination, by the letter from the queen to bishop Heton: "Proud prelate, I "understand you are backward in complying with your agreement, but I "would have you to know, that I, who made you what you are, can unmake "you, and if you do not forthwith fulfil your engagement, I will unfrock "you. Your's, as you demean yourself, Elizabeth." *Stevenson's Appendix to Bentham's Ely.*

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marks it a place of some note, which it undoubtedly must have been whilst the Nene and Ouse discharged their waters that way, and when "ships of great burthen "resorted thither." * In respect to the etymology of the name of Wisbech, it is difficult to speak with certainty. The first syllable is probably derived from the river Ouse, which at one period was called the river "Wise;" † and we have seen instances where the first syllable of proper names is altered without any reason being assigned, as in Falkingham, which in Domesday book is called "Folchin." The latter syllable has commonly or vulgarly been considered as taking its origin from "Beach" of the sea; but may not the termination be found in the Saxon word "Bec," (which signifies water or a running river) for it has been shewn that it was called by the Saxons, Visebec or Wisebec? In Domesday book we find it to be "Wisebece," and in the times of Edward I. Edward III. Richard II. and Henry VI. Dugdale writes the name "Wisebeche." At the foundation of the guild in 1379, it is spelt in the books of the brotherhood, and on their corporate seal, "Wysbech." Again, in the charters of king Edward VI. and king Charles II. the orthography is "Wysbeche." We read of "Bec," in Normandy, famous for its abbey, as the name of a place seated *on a tongue of land at the confluence of two rivers*, the situation of which precisely answers to that of Wisbech, at the mouth of the Ouse (or Wise) and Nene. Beccles, in Suffolk, is on the river Waveney; Skirbeck, in Lincolnshire, is on the bank of the Witham. From the many changes in orthography and pronunciation, the original or radical word, whence many of our towns and villages have taken their names,

* Bedesdale. † Dugdale, p. 307. 15th Edward III. 1338.

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must rest upon mere conjecture; but, under the above authorities, our opinion is with deference offered,—that the termination had its origin from the Saxon word "bec," which has been softened down to "bech," for the aspiration "ch" was brought in by the Normans, as is exemplified by the Saxon "ic" formed into "ich," "cild" into "child," &c.; and that the mode of late years adopted and used by the inhabitants of the town in writing it "Wisbech," is the true and right orthography. The history of the town, though certainly of great antiquity, is involved in much obscurity, for independent of Wulphere's charter in A. D. 664, little thereof is known anterior to A. D. 1000,* when the manor of Wisbech † is said to have been given to the abbot and convent of Ely, by Oswi and Leofiede, daughter of Brithnod, the first abbot, when their son Ailwin, afterwards bishop of Elmham, was admitted into the monastery‡ of Ely. It is well known that few towns excited any particular notice at the time of the conquest, when the greatest boroughs were scarcely more than country villages, the inhabitants living in entire dependance on the king or great lord.

On reference to Domesday book, that spring and fountain of all chorography, the following notice of Wisbech will be there found:

* Temp. Etheldred II. one of the Saxon princes.

† Great part of this estate was assigned to the monks after Ely became a bishop's see, and now belongs to the dean and chapter of Ely. The remainder, "Wisbech Barton," was annexed to the see, and is the paramount manor of the hundred. The annual value of this last manor was taken A. D. 1588, at £142. 4s. 10d.

‡ Monasteries, in early times, were the chief schools where persons of quality, and others of both sexes, were usually bred up and educated in religion and learning.

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Inter Recorda in Thesaurario Curiæ receptæ Scaccariij adservata, viz. in Libro vocat. Domesday, continetur ut sequitur:

Grentebrscire.

Terra Abbatie de Elyg,

In Cestretone Hund.*

M. Wisbece, tenr. abb. de Ely. Ibi x. hide tra. e. x. car. In dnio. 1 hida, 7 1 virg. 7 ibi su. 11 car. Ibi xv.

* An alteration has taken place in the division of the hundreds since the survey of Domesday; Wisbech was then included in a hundred called Chesterton.

Domesday book, according to Sir H. Spelman, if not the most ancient, is yet the most venerable monument of Great Britain, and contains an account of all the lands of England, except the four northern counties, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Durham, and part of Lancashire; and describes the quantity and particular nature of them, whether meadow, pasture, arable, wood, or waste land. It mentions the rent and taxation, and records the several possessors of land, their number and distinct degrees. King Alfred, about the year 900, composed a book of the like nature, of which this was, in some measure, a copy. The exact time of William I. undertaking the survey is differently stated; but it appears to have been begun in 1080, and completed in 1086. The reason given for doing it was, that every man should be satisfied with his own right, and not usurp with impunity what belonged to another. By this also, William would be acquainted with an exact knowledge of the property of the crown, by the forfeitures of the lands of the English nobility who fell at the battle of Hastings; and he was thus enabled to remunerate his Norman followers, by the grants of their immense confiscated estates. When it hath been necessary to distinguish whether lands were held in ancient demesne, or in what other manner, recourse hath always been had to Domesday book, and to that only, to determine the doubt. If lands were set down in that book under the title of "Terra Regis," or if it was said there, "Rex habet" such land or such a town, it was determined to be the king's ancient demesne. If the land or town were therein set down under the name of a private lord or subject, then it was determined to have been, at the time of the survey, the land of such private person, and not ancient demesne. Indeed, its name is said to have been derived from its definitive authority, from which, as at the sentence pronounced at doomsday, or the day of judgment, there could be no appeal. This record is comprised in two volumes, one a folio, the

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villi. qsq. x. ac. 7 xiii. sochi de ii. hid. 7 dim. q. non potuer. nec poss. receder hi. oms. viii. car. Ibi. xvii. cot. 7 ii. servi. De piscar. mill. 7 q'ngent. anguill. ptu. x. car. pasta. ad pec. villæ. Int. tot. val. 7 valuit c. sol. T. R. E. vi. lib. hoc M. jacet 7 jacuit in dnio. eccle. In ead. villa ii. piscat. redd. abbi xiiii. mill. anguil. 7 de psent. xiii. sol. 7 iiii. den. Sup oms. hoes. huj. ville ht. abb. socam.

Terra Sci. Eadmundi.

In Wisbece ht. isd. abb. i. piscatore, redd. v. mil. anguill.

other a quarto; the first is written on three hundred and eighty-two double pages of vellum, in a small but plain character, each page having a double column. Some of the capital letters and principal passages are touched with red ink, and some have strokes of red ink run across them, as if scratched out, but the design was to mark such passages with more particular notice: this volume contains the description of thirty-one counties; towards the beginning of each county, there is a catalogue of the capital lords or great land-holders who possessed any thing in it, beginning with the king, and then naming the great lords according to their rank and dignity. The other volume is in quarto, written on four hundred and fifty double pages of vellum, but in a single column, and in a large but very fair character. It contains the counties of Essex, fo. 1, Norfolk, fo. 109, Suffolk, fo. 281 to the end; part of the county of Rutland is included in that of Northampton, and part of Lancashire in the counties of York and Chester. Until of late years, it has been kept under three different locks and keys;—one in the custody of the treasurer, and the others of the two chamberlains of the exchequer.—It is now deposited in the Chapter-House at Westminster, where it may be consulted, on paying to the proper officer a fee of six and eightpence for a search, and fourpence per line for a transcript. Many parts of the ancient record have been printed in different county histories, and many more are to be found in public and private libraries. A catalogue of them is given in an account of Domesday book, written by Philip Carterett Webb, Esq. and published in 1756 by the Antiquarian Society. Another has been since published by Richard Gough, Esq. in his useful book, "Anecdotes of British Topography," ranged under the different counties. The whole was, in the year 1783, printed at the public expense, by order of his late majesty king George III. with types cut for that purpose, and a copy presented to each member of parliament. *Extract from Preface to Grose's Antiquities.*

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Terra Eccle. de Croiland,
In Cestredone Hd.

In Wisbece ht. abb. de Croilant iiii. piscat. redd. iiii. x. mill. anguill.

Terra Eccle. de Ramesyg,
In Norestor Hund.

In Wisbece ht. abb. de Ramesi viii. piscatores, redd. v. mil. 7 cc. lx. anguill.

Terra Willi. de Warene.

In Wisbece ht. Wills. vi. piscatores in Hund. de Ely, reddtes. iii. mill. anguill. 7 dim. 7 v. sol.

Copy and Translation from Domesday Book, in the Exchequer, which contains an account of all the Lands of England, taken by order of William I. in 1080, *and completed in* 1086.

Amongst the records kept in the treasury of the court of exchequer, viz. in the book called Domesday, is contained as follows:

Cambridgeshire.

Land of the abbot of Ely in Cestreton hundred.

The abbot of Ely holds the manor of Wisbece. There are ten hides of land, ten caracutes or plough lands. In demesne, one hide and one yard land, and there are two plough lands.* There are fifteen villeins,† ten

* A caracute of land at the survey was sixty acres; a hide, one hundred and twenty. The whole island was said to be divided into 243,600 hides. Some say that a caracute was the same measure applied to arable land, as the hide to meadow land.

† Villeins were bond servants bound to serve their proprietor. The slaves, or *villeins*, formed by far the most numerous rank in society, and were the absolute property of their lords, and incapable of possessing any

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of whom are to an acre; and thirteen socmen,* of two hides and an half, who cannot or are not able to remove from all their eight plough lands. There are seventeen cottages and two bondsmen. The fisheries produced 1,500 eels; ten plough lands of meadow pasture for the cattle of the town. In the whole it is and hath been valued at *one hundred shillings*; in the time of king Edward the Confessor at £ 6.;† this manor lies and hath lain in the demesne of the church. In the same town, two fisheries did render to the abbot 14,000 eels, and at present doth render 13*s*. 4*d*. The abbot hath soke over all the men of the town.

Land of St. Edmund's.

In Wisbece the same abbot has one fishery, which renders 5,000 eels.

Land of the church of Crowland,
In Cestretone hundred.

In Wisbece the abbot of Crowland hath four fisheries, rendering 14,000 eels.

property themselves. Dr. Brady assures us, from a survey of Domesday book, that in all the counties of England, the far greater part of the land was occupied by them, and that the husbandmen, and still more the socmen, who were tenants not removable at pleasure, were very few in comparison. The perpetual wars in the heptarchy were probably the cause of this great number of vassals, for prisoners taken in war, or carried off in the frequent inroads of the different petty princes, were reduced to slavery by right of war.

* Socmen were yeomen free of blood and fit for honourable service; bordars were small farmers just above cottagers.

† The pound here mentioned was the weight of a pound in silver, consisting of twelve ounces, which is equal in weight to £3. 2*s*. of our money. The shilling consisted of twelve pence, and equal in weight to three shillings of our money. By the laws of Athelstan, a sheep was valued at one shilling, or fifteen pence; an ox computed at six times the value of a sheep, and a cow at four.

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Land of the church of Ramsey,
In Norestor hundred.

In Wisbece the abbot of Ramsey hath eight fisheries, which render 5,260 eels.

Land of William de Warren.

In Wisbece William hath six fisheries in the hundred of Ely, rendering 3,000 eels and five shillings.

This valuable document, with the preceding remarks, seems to establish the antiquity of the town of Wisbech, which, although it has heretofore laboured under many disadvantages, is now rapidly emerging from the obscurity with which it was once clouded, and by the enterprising spirit prevailing in modern times, is become a place of extensive trade and commerce. The calamities by inundation, the diversion of the Ouse and Nene waters, and other causes consequent thereupon, would no doubt, for a considerable time, impair the consequence of Wisbech as a sea port. In latter times, an improved navigation has been obtained, by means of the straight cut or river from Peterborough, by Smith's Leam, to Guyhirn,* whereby a large portion of water is conveyed through Wisbech, to the outfall at Cross Keys Wash. This river, which is simply called "the Great River," has become of considerable consequence for the purposes of navigation, forming a communication with the upland country, and supplying Peterborough, Oundle, Northampton, and other places, with various kinds of merchandize, such as coals, timber, &c.; it is also of such magnitude and depth, that at spring tides vessels of one hundred tons burthen,

* See page 39.

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as before mentioned,* bring their full cargoes up to the quays. Wisbech is situated on both sides of the river, over which is a handsome stone bridge, with an elliptical arch of seventy-two feet span, and from the circumstance of the waters passing through the midst of the town, it has frequently been compared by strangers to some of the towns in Holland, with which it may vie in neatness and cleanliness.

The tides come with great velocity up the river, and flow many miles beyond Wisbech. The resistance, by the influx of the tides meeting the ebb waters, is called the Hygre, or Ægre,† which rushes in with considerable impetuosity about the time of either of the equinoxes. At every new and full moon, the spring tides flow about eight feet. The situation of the town, by a kind providence, is so placed as not to alarm the inhabitants with tempestuous waves, and yet so accommodated as to enjoy the delightful scene of this most desirable and useful flow of water, whilst the flux and reflux of the sea must undoubtedly contribute to the health of the inhabitants and the salubrity of the surrounding country.

Wisbech gives name to a hundred and deanery. The parish is ten miles in length, and two or three miles broad, containing about 15,700 acres of land. The town has a corporate body, which enjoys certain municipal privileges, but possesses no magisterial jurisdiction. Edward VI. in the first year of his reign, granted the

* See page 63.

† Ægre, in Runic, signifies the ocean. Johnson.

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inhabitants a charter of incorporation, which was confirmed by James I. and lastly by Charles II. of which, and of the mode of electing its annual officers, we shall speak hereafter more at large.*

After the gift of the manor of Wisbech to the church of Ely,† we meet with no further account thereof, until William the Conqueror erected the fortress there, which being a feature of the most memorable antiquity attached to the place, we shall proceed to give some account of this

ANCIENT CASTLE.

Grose, in his "Antiquities of England," remarks, that castles walled with stone, and designed for residence as well as defence, are for the most part of no higher antiquity than the conquest; for although the Saxons, Romans, and even the ancient Britons, had castles built with stone, yet they were few in number, and, through neglect, so much decayed, that little more than their ruins were remaining: this is assigned by many of our historians and antiquaries, as one of the reasons for the facility with which William made himself master of this country.

By Domesday book it does not appear that any castle at that time existed at Wisbech, but William the

* The origin of corporations is thus deduced in Maddox's MSS. collections: "The king committed a town to the townsmen themselves, "at farm during his pleasure, instead of committing it to the hands of a "provost or farmer; they then obtained it in fee farm, that is, in perpetual "farm, and afterwards prevailed on the king to grant their farm to their "heirs; they lastly prevailed on him to make them a corporate body, and "thus it was soon forgot that those towns had ever been holden in demesne "by the king."

† A. D. 1000. p. 116.

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Conqueror, in the last year of his reign, erected a castle of stone, not only, as it was said, to curb the outlaws, who had made incursions from the fens into the uplands, but to keep the refractory English barons in check.* At the time of the erection of the castle,† the waters of the Ouse passing by Well emptied themselves into the north sea beyond Wisbech, running at a very short distance from the castle walls, and the exact spot of the building has been by Camden and other authors shewn to be where the late castle (taken down in 1816) stood; the site whereof now forms the space or garden, surrounded by a low brick wall, in the centre of that part of the town called the Crescent. Many proprietors of land in West Walton, a village in Norfolk, about three miles distant, were obliged by their tenure to repair the walls and ditch or moat of the castle. The governor was dignified by the title of constable, and had a guard of soldiers. The building, which covered two acres of land, stood in the midst of other four acres, at the boundary of which was a strong high wall, and on the outside next the town was a ditch or moat forty feet wide, and there was no way to the castle but by a drawbridge in the west front. This castle was more than once in a state of siege, through the rebellious spirit of certain lay lords and

* See page 97.

† In the Gentleman's Magazine of 1774, p. 313, is the following observation on the antiquity of Wisbech castle. "Wisbech castle, according to historians, was built by William the Conqueror for a check to "the malecontents of the isle of Ely, over which castle he appointed a "constable, with a garrison of soldiers under him, for he found it exceeding "difficult to dislodge them out of the fens; upon which they built a castle "of turf over against it, from which they had frequent skirmishes." The situation of the castles of the Anglo-Norman kings was most commonly near a river.

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others who were opposed to the king; and for the better and more secretly conveying of intelligence at those times between the garrison and their friends, who were on the outside of the ditch or moat, (no one being admitted) lead pipes * were laid within the walls under ground, and under the walls and ditch to the outside, next a way called Deadman's Lane,† and by the said pipes being branched out to all parts of the basement story of the building, the sound of speech is said to have been conveyed either to or from the garrison.

A document from the muniment office of the lord bishop of Ely records that in 1236, not only the town of Wisbech, but the castle also, was utterly destroyed by a violent inundation of the sea. A very short time, however, restored the castle, for we meet with the name of a constable or keeper thereof in 1246, and at this early period it seems to have been a place of custody for state prisoners. Stevenson, in his Appendix to Bentham's Ely, states that in 1297, John de Dromore, of Scotland, was a prisoner in this castle, and was manumised on condition that he should go to king Edward, then beyond sea, and serve him faithfully against the king of France.

In the reign of Henry II. this fortress was dismantled. In the year 1312, (6th Edward II.) the custody of the

* On digging up the foundation of the castle premises, such pipes or tubes were found in the lower part thereof, about three inches diameter, extending to the moat from the four quarters of the building, as related to the compiler by the present possessor of the premises.

† The lane called Deadman's Lane, leading direct from the eastern abutment of the bridge to the church, may be presumed to have been the general road or way by which, in former times, funerals were carried to the church, and thence obtained its name of Deadman's Way or Lane.

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isle of Ely was granted to John de Ketene, then bishop of Ely: the castle is not mentioned, but the safe custody of the island is granted in general words, viz. "Securam Custodiam Insulæ." Also, in 1314, Robert Wishart, bishop of Glasgow, and the wife of Robert Brus, were here confined as prisoners, and conducted from hence to York.

In 1404, the keeper of the arms was paid threepence per day, and about this time the walls were re-built with ragstone, and a new bridge erected.

In 1405, the draw-bridge occurs, and in making a sewer a few years since for the houses in Yorke Row, standing upon part of the old castle premises, the workmen found an old stone foundation, which was supposed to be the base of the draw-bridge.* In 1409, new flood-gates, which cost £30. 3*s.* and a new water-gate, were erected. A gate also is mentioned by Dugdale,† on the south-east side, next to Elm. In 1410, a new "Pons tracta-"bilis" was formed, leading towards the church, and it seems there was a chapel within and a bridge without the castle. There were likewise a dove-house and a garden within the castle walls, the former was totally destroyed in 1513. In 1414, Dominus Heyle, and several prisoners taken by the earl of Dorchester, were kept in this prison by permission of bishop Fordham, and in 1476 the prison was repaired. The castle having grown

* In digging a sewer from the castle premises, since they were sold by the see of Ely, several earthen pipes were found similar to those at Walpole, (p. 11.) The pipes were made of palish red earth, which grew hard again upon being exposed some time to the air; the length of them was about twenty inches, and the bore three inches and three quarters.

† Page 314.—In the year 1372.

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out of repair by age, bishop Morton, between the years 1478 and 1483, erected another of brick on the site of that of the Conqueror, and that prelate, as well as several of his successors, usually resided there during a part of the year, and it became from that period a palace of the bishops of Ely. In the year 1500, Alcock, bishop of Ely, who succeeded bishop Morton, and was founder of Jesus College, Cambridge, died at his castle here.* In queen Elizabeth's reign, the castle was made a prison for priests and jesuits; this appropriation is presumed to have occurred between 1579 and 1599, as the see was then vacant for twenty years, and the temporalities were in the possession of the crown, "ratione sedis vacantis." In Collier's Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, in the time of archbishop Whitgift,† it is stated that the priests and religious confined in Wisbech castle came to an open rupture, on account of one father Weston, a jesuit, who pretended to make orders, and set up for governor over all the rest; the majority of the seculars, however, refused to admit this assumption, and alleged that this post had been offered to Watson, bishop of Lincoln, who died prisoner in the castle, and that he refused this governing distinction as unsuitable to their then circumstances, from affliction and confinement. At this time, a Roman catholic priest of character came to Wisbech, to whom the difference being referred, he decided the question against the jesuits.

* Willis, in his History of Cathedrals, observes, that "bishop Alcock "bestowed great costs on his house at Hatfield, and also at Wisbech "castle, which he re-built of brick."

† Vol. ii. book vii. p. 643:—published in 1714.

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The design of that horrible attempt against the protestant cause (the gunpowder plot) is said in Aikin's Memoirs of James I. to have originated with Robert Catesby, a gentleman of fortune and consequence, as far back as 1588; his influence, his talents, and above all his zeal, had rendered him an object of suspicion to the government of Elizabeth, and he was one of those whom it was judged expedient, on the approach of the armada, to commit to safe custody in Wisbech castle. Francis Tresham, also a gentleman of family and fortune, supposed to have been an early depositary of this portentous secret, was fellow-prisoner of Catesby at Wisbech in the year 1608.

That it was considered as a place of custody for state prisoners, is shewn by the fact that the following dignitaries, who were under a charge of conspiracy against the government of the queen, died there, and are said to be all buried in Wisbech church, viz. Thomas Whyte, bishop of Lincoln, in 1584; John Freckingham, the last abbot of Westminster, in 1585;* and Thomas Watson, bishop of Lincoln, in 1587.†

Dr. Lancelot Andrews, who was bishop of Ely between 1609 and 1619, and concerned in the new translation of the Bible, laid out about £2,000. in repairing Wisbech castle and other residences.‡

* Freckingham was sent to convert lady Jane Grey to popery. He was chaplain to bishop Bonner. Walpole.

† Supplement to Bentham's Ely.

‡ This excellent prelate was successively bishop of Chichester, Ely, and Westminster, and all on account of his worth, without any ambitious suit or seeking of his own to qualify him for preferment; his life was

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The office of constable or keeper of the castle appears to have been always conferred upon a person of distinction, who had his deputy, and held courts leet, baron, and hundred courts. The courts of oyer and terminer for the isle were held in the moat-hall there, and public meetings of importance were at times held there, such as commissions of sewers.* In 1414, the constable's fee was £26. 7*s.* 8*d.*; his dwelling was a hall of freestone, near the gates of the castle. In one patent, (1443) the house and chambers called "Le "Dungeon"† are allotted to the constable, who was amenable for the safety of the prisoners committed to the gaol.

orderly, innocent, industrious, and pious; from his childhood he was a great orientalist, and thoroughly acquainted with the fathers and other antiquities of the Christian church. He is said to have had especial skill in at least fifteen learned and modern tongues, and his knowledge in ancient languages was extensive, which qualified him for being one of the translators of the Bible in the reign of James I.; he was also a singular benefactor to the preferment he enjoyed, either by securing or increasing the revenue, or in building, repairing, and beautifying the houses and palaces committed to his care. He was a most exemplary person—had the mien and air of a primitive bishop, and was no less commendable in his life than in his learning. The able and excellent dean Stanhope presented the public with a translation of the devotions of the good bishop Andrews. They were composed in Greek and Latin, for his own private daily use, and, as a manual of devotion, will recommend themselves by their usefulness and importance. The manuscript was scarcely ever out of his hands; it was found worn in pieces by his fingers, and wet with his tears. A new edition of the dean's translation has been lately published, and is strongly recommended for perusal.

* Dugdale, p. 308. A. D. 1338.

† The great tower was the residence of the constable or governor; under ground were dismal dark vaults for the confinement of prisoners, which made this tower sometimes be called the keep or dungeon. In this building was the great hall, in which the owner displayed his hospitality by entertaining his numerous friends and followers.

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The Names of the following Constables appear on Record.

1246 William Justice.
1262 Simon de Dullingham.
1308 Richard de Halstead.
1401 Thomas de Bramstone.*
1403 Sir John de Rochford.
1410 Sir John de Colvile.
1446 Sir Andrew Hoggard or Ogard.†
1476 Sir Thomas Grey.
1489 Sir Thomas Hobard.
1525 Walter and Miles Hubbard.
1531 Thomas Megges, Arm.
Sir Richard Cromwell.
1605 William Chester, sen. Esq.
1633 Matthias Taylor, Esq.

The bishops of Ely used to make the castle their residence during their stay at Wisbech, and it was the custom of the corporation to make a provision for the bishop during his continuance; and so late as the year 1668, the town-bailiff was ordered to buy an ox, one wether sheep, and one calf, to be brought into the castle for provision for my lord of Ely, and subsequently a buck was ordered to be sent from Exton Park, to present one half to the bishop of Ely.

There is no account when the moat or ditch was filled up, but it is presumed to have been done previously to the erecting of the building by Thurloe.‡ When the

* See this name among the ancient monuments in "the Church."

† See title,—"Hagbech Hall."

‡ In 1583, the castle dyke is alluded to in the description of the wards of the town, as being then open, but no further notice is thereafter taken of it.

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possessions of the church were sold, Thurloe, afterwards secretary to Oliver Cromwell, purchased the castle, and erected the fabric recently taken down, which is said to have been after a design of Inigo Jones, upon a model of the lord Chief Justice Oliver St. John's seat, at Long Thorpe, near Peterborough.* In the castle used to be a painting, in which is a view of this seat, with Mr. Thurloe walking up the steps, and his wife looking out of a window.†

On the restoration, the castle reverted to the see of Ely, but it does not appear to have been ever afterwards an episcopal residence, and the bishops of the diocese generally granted it on lease to one of the principal families in Wisbech; the Southwells, in particular, had separate grants thereof for five several terms of twenty-one years, (making altogether one hundred and five years) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the last of whom was Edward Southwell, Esq. In 1793, an act of parliament was passed, intitled, "An Act to "enable the Lord Bishop of Ely to sell the Castle of "Wisbech Saint Peter's, in the Isle of Ely, in the "County of Cambridge, and the Garden and Appurte-"nances thereto belonging; and for applying the Money

* He is said not only to have erected the building for himself, but likewise some houses for his sons near it. *Gent's. Mag.* 1774, p. 332.

† This painting was removed to the palace at Ely. Jonathan Peckover, Esq. of Wisbech, a great encourager of the polite arts, was at the expense of causing an engraving of this building to be made, which appears in Stevenson's Appendix to Bentham's Ely. No representation has been preserved of the ancient building by William the Conqueror, or of that of bishop Morton.

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" to arise from such sale in manner therein mentioned." By this act, after reciting that the lord bishop was, in right of his see of Ely, seized of a certain ancient mansion called the Castle, in Wisbech Saint Peter's, with the site, gardens, buildings, and appurtenances thereto belonging, the whole containing, by estimation, five acres; and that as the town of Wisbech was improving, and like to increase in its trade and populousness, it was supposed that many persons would be willing to purchase the fee simple of the said ground and premises, at an advantageous price; and that if power was given for that purpose, and for investing the monies thence arising in the purchase of other estates, and to the same use; it would not only be for convenience of the town, where buildings were wanted, but to the improvement of the revenues of the see:— therefore the lord bishop was empowered to sell the said castle and premises, and the monies arising by such sale were directed to be laid out in the purchase of other lands, &c. within the diocese of Ely. In the year 1793, the entire premises were put up for sale by auction in London, in five lots, and Mr. Joseph Medworth, a native of Wisbech, but who then resided at Bermondsey, in Surry, became the purchaser of the castle, with the gardens and ground belonging thereto, for £1,945. and £300. more for the materials. Mr. Medworth immediately removed all the detached offices, parcelling out the ground for building, and commenced the erection of several new and handsome houses in the form of a crescent, according to a design which he had previously drawn. He also purchased of Mr. John Powell a dwelling house and premises, at a great price, for the purpose of a more easy communi-

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Drawn on the spot by J. C. Lewy. *Melville Sc.*

THE CRESCENT, WISBECH,

This Plate (Engraved at the Expence of Ab.m Usill Esq.) is Inscribed to him by his sincere friend

Wm Watson.

Published by H.& J. Leach, Wisbech 1797

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cation with the market-place, thereby forming a street from the castle premises into the heart of the town.* The crescent is now extended into a circus, which is completed, and consists of more than fifty houses, thereby adding much to the pleasantness and beauty of the town. Mr. Medworth may be said to be one of the greatest contributors in modern times towards the general improvement of the place, having expended several very considerable sums of money in erecting houses of such description as to invite respectable families to become residents there. After disposing of the surrounding ground for the purpose of building, Mr. Medworth retained the residue (consisting of the castle itself, with the inclosed garden) in his own possession and occupation, and in the year 1811, offered such reserved portion to the corporation of Wisbech on very moderate terms.† The object was, that as the grammar school house on the north-east side of Ship Street was greatly in decay, the castle might be appropriated for the residence of the master, and for the school; that the old ruinous buildings then used for those purposes might be pulled down, and the open space thus formed converted into a public street, to communicate directly across the old horse-fair and canal, with the Lynn road, thus avoiding the abrupt and dangerous turn at the end of Ship Lane or Ship Street by the Bell inn, and

* A stone affixed in the front of one of the houses at the opening of market-street thus records this transaction :—"The entrance to this street "from the market-place is the freehold property of Mr. Joseph Medworth, "of Bermondsey, purchased by him at £400. for the accommodation of "the town of Wisbech, A. D. 1793."

† The price was £2,000.;—one moiety to be paid down, and the other moiety to be secured by the bond of the corporation at interest for twenty years.

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forming a handsome approach into Wisbech by a street leading from the Lynn road in a direct line to the market-place. The capital burgesses of that day, however, disapproved of the plan, being fearful of not having sufficient pecuniary means to purchase the castle, and carry into effect the improvements expected to be consequent thereupon. Their rejection of it was, nevertheless, much to the regret of many individuals, who wished the real welfare and improvement of the town; as, if that design had been adopted, the castle built by secretary Thurloe would then have remained standing, and continued to be one of the handsomest ornaments of this improving place. After the corporation came to this decision, Mr. Medworth, considering the fabric too large for his own private occupation, took it down, and erected a modern house on a different part of the garden and ground, fronting the west entrance into the church-yard, which he still denominates the castle, and now occupies. Sir Charles Henry Colvile, of Duffield Hall, in Derbyshire, a lineal descendant of Sir John Colvile, the governor of the castle in 1410,* has a seal of copper in his family, which is generally understood to have been the official seal of Wisbech castle.†

Transactions relative to the Town of Wisbech.

A.D. 1190. One of the earliest occurrences on record, subsequent to the erection of the castle, is the notice bestowed on the town by king Richard I. in the second year of his reign, who was pleased to grant to the tenants of

* See page 130.

† An engraving of this seal has been taken from an impression furnished to the compiler by Sir Charles Colvile.

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Melville sc.

WISBECH CASTLE,

As Re-built by Secretary Thurloe. Taken down in 1816.

Published by H.K.J Leach. Wisbeach 1824.

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Wisbech Barton manor a freedom or exemption from toll in all fairs or markets throughout England, which grant was afterwards confirmed by king John; and when this latter monarch was driven to extremity by his barons, who had offered to acknowledge Louis, eldest son of Philip of France, for their sovereign, he seems to have been flying from one place of defence to another for refuge, for more than four months in which period we hear of him at Winchester, Hereford, Gloucester, Oxford, Cambridge, Lynn, Wisbech, &c. Most of the quarters where the king took refuge were places of strength, and had their castles. At this time, the inhabitants of Lynn, which ranked high among the trading towns of the kingdom, espoused that monarch's cause to the utmost of their ability, and manifested their zeal, not only by raising recruits for his army, but by furnishing sailors and ships for naval operations; and whilst there, he granted to the townsmen various privileges and immunities, raising them to be a free burgh, with a charter of incorporation.* On his departure from Lynn on the 12th October 1216, the king came to Wisbech, as Dr. Brady proves from original records in the tower, and in all probability took up his residence at the castle there, as a place of defence. There is no solid mark of this monarch's residence at Wisbech, except that he

A.D. 1214.

1216.

* King John, notwithstanding all the faults which, it is to be feared, are too justly charged upon him, had some right notions for the advancement and prosperity of the towns and people: he erected demesne towns into free burghs, which prepared the way for the gradual diffusion of commerce through his dominions. Instead of king's collectors levying sundry tolls and taxes, there was now only one annual sum paid, which was called "the "Fee Farm Rent" of each respective burgh. Before his time, the crown had appointed a chief officer, who raised several taxes in an arbitrary way. King John gave the townsmen the privilege of electing their chief officer annually out of their own body.

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might furnish the means of erecting certain almshouses, there being buildings of that denomination, called by many "King John's Almshouses," situate on the north side of the church-yard; but this is a very doubtful matter, and even if they were erected from his donation when at Wisbech, they certainly have been re-built, not bearing the least mark of antiquity about them. The king was at this time assembling a considerable army, with a view of fighting a great battle, and thus striking a decisive blow; but after leaving Wisbech, he took the road across the washes, which he attempted to pass at an improper time, when he lost, by the flow of the sea, all his carriages, treasures, baggage, and regalia.* The affliction of this disaster, and vexation from the distracted state of his affairs, no doubt helped to increase the sickness under which he was then labouring; nevertheless, he proceeded onward, and took up his abode at Swineshead abbey, in Lincolnshire, and on the 15th of October arrived at Sleaford, but when he reached the castle of Newark on the 18th, he was obliged to halt, soon after which his distemper

* Matthew Paris, who died in 1259, makes king John lose his baggage in crossing the river Nene. He says, "Veniens autem per Burgum et "Croilandiam, ipsam ecclesiam depredatus est, deinde per maneria "abbatis de Croiland transiens, omnes segetes ejus sicut erant, in fine "autumni, congestæ in favillas redegit. Novissime per urbem que Len "appellatur transitum faciens, ab urbanis cum gaudio susceptus est, et "magnis donariis honoratus. Deinde versus aquilonem iter arripiens, "in fluvio qui *Welle Stream* dicitur, carretas omnes, vigas et summarios "cum thesauris vasis pretiosis et regalibus omnibus, quæ propensiori "cura dilexit, inopinato eventu amisit. Aperta est enim in mediis "fluctibus, terra et voraginis abyssus quæ absorbuerunt universa, cum "hominibus et equis ita quo'm nec pes unus evasit, qui regi casum "nunciaret." There is a house at some distance below Sutton Washway which still bears the name of "King John's House," and tradition says he crossed there. See also a place called King's Creek, p. 60. (Note.)

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put an end to his life, in the forty-ninth year of his age and eighteenth of his reign, and thus freed the nation from the dangers to which it was equally exposed by his success and by his misfortunes.

About twenty years after this period, a very lamentable disaster befel the town of Wisbech, by a most violent storm and tempest causing an inundation of the sea, which carried all before it, and laid the town and country many miles around it under water. Holinshed, in his chronicles, thus notices it: "About this time, (21st "Henry III.) many wonderful strange lights were seen "in different parts of England, afterwards followed "by great tempests of rain, and on the morrow after "the feast of St. Martin, and certain days after, the "sea burst out, with such tides and tempests of wind, "that the marish countries neare to the same were "drowned and overflowen, beside great heards and "flocks of cattel that perished. The sea rose con- "tinually in flowing the space of two days and one "night without ebbing, by reason of the mighty "violence of contrarie winds. At Wisbech also, and "in villages thereabouts, the people were drowned in "great numbers, so that in one village there were "buried one hundred corpses in one day. Also, the day "before Christmas eve, there chanced a great wind, "with thunder and rain in such extream, that many "buildings were shaken and overthrown."* A.D. 1236.

* Holinshed, vol. iii. p. 220. Matthew of Westminster also makes the following remark on the same storm: "In crastino vero beati Martini et "per octavas ipsius, vento validissimo, associato tumultu quasi tonitruo, "mundaverunt fluctus maris metas solidas, transeuntes ita quod in confusio "ipsius maris, et in marisco utpote apud *Wisbeche*, et locis consimilibus "naviculæ pecora necnon et hominum maxime periit multitudo."

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A storm of such description must have been attended with calamitous consequences, not only to individual and private property in the neighbourhood, but to the defences and embankments of the country. Neither was this the only misfortune experienced by the town of Wisbech from inundation, as the extract from the muniment office of the lord bishop of Ely, before
A.D. referred to,* states that thirty years after, "the
1266. "town of Wisbech and castle were utterly destroyed" by a violent inundation of the sea. From such devastating effects, it would probably be a considerable time before the town would recover itself. It appears, however, from Dugdale, that excessive pains were taken and vast expenses laid out in preserving the country from utter drowning, and in the recovery of the districts suffering by these disasters.

1327. In 1st Edward III. John Hotham, bishop of Ely, obtained a charter for a fair at Wisbech, to be holden for twenty successive days, to begin on Trinity eve. A few years after, we read of an hospital at Wisbech, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the mastership of which was in the gift of the bishop of Ely.† Whether the almshouses said to be king John's were erected on the decline of this hospital, and thence took their name,

* See page 125.

† "Regist. Episc. Elien. Rex concessit Johanni Francies in feodo "certa mess. terr. in Wisbich, nuper amortizat Hospitalis ibidem, per "servitia debita." And the following masters of this hospital are recorded:

1234 John de Lenna.
1243 John de Weston.
1259 Rad de Islingburgh.
1350 Rad de Ringslade.
1352 Edward Engeho.

Cole MSS. Brit. Mus.

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which in progress of time were called King John's, cannot now be ascertained, nor is the site of the hospital known, or the time when it was abolished.

The country seemed earnest in using every diligence for the reparation of their banks from time to time, particularly between Wysbeche, Elme, and Welle;* and amongst various other orders, there is one made for constructing a bank for the better safeguard of Elm and Wisbech, viz. from the stone cross,† near the house of lepers, into the town of Wisbech, and thence to the river of Wisbech directly to Guggishurne or Griggishurne. A.D. 1378.

The following year (2d Richard II.) is an important æra in the annals of Wisbech, inasmuch as at this period the Guild of the Holy Trinity was founded, which afterwards led to the incorporation of the town. Guilds, or social confederations, were adopted by the Anglo-Saxons; the objects of their union appears to have been, that every hearth or family should, at Easter in every year, pay one penny; and on the death of any member of the guild, one penny, whether man or woman, for the soul's scot. It seems somewhat to have resembled our benefit societies, in which the members make small stated payments, and are buried 1379.

* Dugdale, p. 306, &c.

† Crosses were formerly erected for various purposes, to determine the boundaries of property, especially of religious houses, such as the cross of St. Guthlac, between Spalding and Crowland; others were raised to deprecate the judgment of the Almighty, through the prayers of the devout, &c. This cross was situated where the stone is now fixed, as the division between the parishes of Wisbech and Elm, on the south side of the canal, usually known as Spital Cross.

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at the expense of the fund; others were for God's love and their soul's need, holding meetings three times a year. Mass priests were appointed to sing a mass for their living friends, and another for their dead friends, and every brother two psalms. At the death of every member, six psalms were to be chaunted, and every man to pay five pennies: in the mercantile towns and seaports, there were also guilds or fraternities of men for carrying on commerce. Domesday book mentions the Gi-halla, or Guildhall, of the burghers of Dover; on other occasions, they were in the nature of friendly associations, made for mutual aid and contribution, to meet the pecuniary exigencies which were perpetually arising from burials, legal exactions, penal mulcts, and other payments or compensations. That much good fellowship was connected with them, can be doubted by no one; the fines of their imposition imply that the materials of conviviality were not forgotten.*

Many religious guilds and fraternities were established in divers parts of the kingdom, though it is not shewn that they received at first any authority from the government to enable them to form such establishment. The head or chief person of the guild was stiled the Alderman, and was chosen by the commonalty of the town. The Wisbech guild was of a religious description, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and called by the name of "THE GUILD OR FRATERNITY OF THE HOLY "TRINITY IN WYSBECH." A certain regularity was preserved in the proceedings of the guild then formed in the town, whereof a register was kept, and which is now filed amongst the records of the corporation.

* Turner's Anglo-Saxons.

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The affairs of this community were directed by a number of persons, consisting sometimes of twelve, and from that number to eighteen, who assembled once a year at the time of the feast of the Holy Trinity, and were called "an Inquisition," at other times "an "Inquest," or "a Jury," by whom the alderman and other officers of the guild were elected: at first only six officers were elected, viz.

An Alderman,
Two officers called Scabini,*
A Clerk,
A Dean,†
An Hostiliarius.‡

By way of specimen of the terms and method in which the accounts of this fraternity were kept, the first entry is deciphered verbatim from the original, followed by a translation, as attempted by the compiler.

2d Richard II. A.D. 1379. —— *Memorandum qd. hic incipit Liber Compotor. Fraternit. sce. Trinitatis.*

Compotus Ade Reynald Capelli, Simonis Pokedych, Ade Mareys, Gilbti Grouet, Scabinor Gilde sce Trini- A.D. 1379.

* Scabini, Scavini, or Skyvens, were the guardians, governors, or stewards, and had the charge of the goods and effects of the guild. They were two, and sometimes four in number; seniors going off yearly, when two others were chosen. They were sworn, when they received the chattels of the house, to employ the same faithfully to the good of the guild.

† In 1460, he is called "Decanum Ecclesiæ." In 1513, he is ordered to warn the alderman and brethren to bring in their books, accounts, &c. In 1537, he is ordered to give monition to the inquest to have the accounts ready at the election.

‡ A sort of steward of the hall to assist in entertaining strangers.

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tatis de Wysbech, a die dnica. in fo. sce Trinitatis, anno Ri. Ricardi scdi a Conqu. ii. usq. eund die dnicam anno Ri. Ricardi scdi iii. p. un. ann. integru. Imprimis, denar recept ad capellan. Idem R. de £ iiii. 5*s*. 8*d*. re de Fratrib pdce Fraternitat a fo Sci. Michael, a Ri. Ricardi, scdi iij. usq. dem. Fm. Sci. Michael px. seqns pt. denar q. erunt recept. de x. nov adventiciis per ttio. Nativitat Sci. John Bapte px. sequt:—Sm. £4. 9*s*. Idem. R. de 26*s*. 8*d*. recept de 64 Frator pdce. Fraternitat per imag sce Trinitat emend:—Sm. 26*s*. 8*d*. Idem re de 46*s*. 8*d*. recept de 14 nov adventiciis, videlt. de Johe Tyd, Johne Austyn, senr. Johne Hillary, Willo. Fyscher, Johne Austyn, junr. Johne Curteys, Martino Mylys, Johne Barbour, Ricardo Barbour, Johne Cuckope, Pet Hurry, Pet Veck, Henrico Barker, and Willo. Dunhm. de quolibet eor. 3*s*. 4*d*.:—Sm. 46*s*. 8*d*. Idem re de 111*s*. 8*d*. recept de 67 Fratrib. pdce. Fratern. videlt. de quolib. eor. 20*d*.:—Sm. 111*s*. 8*d*. Sm. total £13. 14*s*.

Expens.—Imprimis, Coputant solut Dno. Ade Reynald capello celebut p. pdca Fratern. per ann. integru videlt. a fo. Sci. Michael ultio, pttio. usq. dcm. Fm. px. seqns. £4. 6*s*. 8*d*.:—Suma £4. 6*s*. 8*d*. Idem coput in un imag Sce Trinitat empt. 25*s*. 3*d*. Et solut cementar, 8*s*. Et solut 1 ho. auxil. pdcos. cementar per 1 die 4*d*. Et solut Johi Kyngsper per le Parclos removend cu meremec, et bordis, et clavis ferrei ad idm. et cerevisa dat opar, 3*s* 2½*d*. Et dat Johi Flaxman, per labore suo usq. Walpole per carriag tabnacli, 6*d*. in sabal et calcer empt. 12*d*.:—Sm. 38*s*. 3½*d*. Idem coput in 2 peciis panni lanei, empt. apd. London, p. capit Fratru pdce. Fraternitat cu carriag a London usq. Wysbech, 106*s*. 8*d*.:—Sm. 106*s*. 8*d*. Idem coput in pane empt.

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3s. 6d. In cvicia ep. 16s. 6d.; in vino 2s. 7½d.; in carnib bovm emptr. 3s.; in croco 1d.; in ovis 4d; in 1 qrt. verjious 2d.; in orpis 3d.; in caseo 13d. In cvisia expend cca. ornacoe auli 4d.; in stipend coci 6d; in rwardo Frat. Lenn per eor. cura et labore 6s. 8d.; in 5 mynstrals 10s. In expens Nicholi Tyneteshall usq. Lenn, per apparatu de dansrs. empt. 5s. 8d. In clavis ferrei empt. per ornacoe auli 6d.; et dat Robto. fil. Thoe. per aula et ornacoe eid. 3s. 4d.; et dat Johi Symond, per 1 hoe. suspens sepeliend 8d.; et solut per tabnaclo in pte. solucois 10s.; in papyro empt per coput ob.:—Sm. £3. 6s. 4d.

Sm. omn. expens, £14. 17s. 10½d. et sic expens excedint recept 23s. 10½d. q. debent solvi. per 67 Fratres, videlt. quilib. eor. ad 5d. et sic reman 23½d. qs. pdci. Fres. in vino, expend anteqm. recednt, et sic de copoto nichil remanet. Amen.

Memorandum that here begins the Book of the Accountants of the Brotherhood of the Holy Trinity.

The account of Adam Reynald, the chaplain, Simon Pokedych, Adam Mareys, Gilbert Grout, the skyvens* of the Guild of the Holy Trinity of Wysbech, from Sunday on the feast of the Holy Trinity, in the 2d year of king Richard II. after the conquest, to the same Sunday in the 3d year of king Richard II. for one whole year: Imprimis, in a tenth received for the chaplain. Also in the sum of £4. 5s. 8d. received of the brotherhood of the said fraternity, from the feast of Saint Michael, in the third year of the reign of A.D. 1379.

* See page 141.

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Richard II. to the feast of Saint Michael next following, except the pence which were received of ten novices, for the third time from the nativity of Saint John the Baptist next following: — Sum, £4. 9*s*. Also in the sum of 26*s*. 8*d*. received of sixty-four brethren of the said fraternity, for the purchase of an image of the Holy Trinity: — Sum, £1. 6*s*. 8*d*. Also in the sum of 46*s*. 8*d*. received of fourteen novices, viz. John Tyd, John Austin, senior, John Hillary, William Fyscher, John Austyn, junior, John Curteys, Martin Mylys, John Barbour, Richard Barbour, John Cuckope, Peter Hurry, Peter Veck, Henry Barker, and William Dunham, of each of them 3*s*. 4*d*.: — Sum, £2. 6*s*. 8*d*. Also in the sum of £5. 11*s*. 8*d*. received of sixty-seven brethren of the aforesaid fraternity, viz. of each of them 20*d*.: — Sum, £5. 11*s*. 8*d*. Total sum, £13. 14*s*.

Expended.—First, they account in a payment made to Mr. Adam Reynald, the officiating chaplain of the said fraternity, for one whole year, viz. from the feast of Saint Michael last past, to the said feast next following, £4. 6*s*. 8*d*.: — Sum, £4. 6*s*. 8*d*. Also they reckon for the purchase of one image of the Holy Trinity, 25*s*. 3*d*. And they paid to the plaisterers 8*s*.; and for one man's assistance for the said plaisterers for one day, 4*d*.; and they paid to John Kyngsper for the removal of *Parclos*, with timber and boards and iron nails for the same, and for beer given to the workmen, 3*s*. 2½*d*.; and they gave to John Flaxman for his labour to Walpole for carriage of the tent, 6*d*.; for sand and whitening bought, 12*d*.: — Sum, £1. 18*s*. 3½*d*. Also they reckon for two pieces of woollen cloth bought in London, for hoods for the brethren of the said fraternity, with the carriage from London to Wisbech, £5. 6*s*. 8*d*.: —

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Sum, £5. 6s. 8d. Also they reckon for bread bought 3s. 6d.; for beer bought 16s. 6d.; for wine 2s. 7½d.; for beef bought 3s.; for saffron* 1d.; for eggs 4d.; for one quart of verjuice 2d.; for fish 3d.; cheese 13d.; for beer given at the fitting up of the hall 4d.; for the cook's wages 6d.; as a reward for the brethren at Lynn for their care and labour 6s. 8d.; for five minstrels 10s.; for the expense of Nicholas Tyneteshalle to Lynn, and for the purchase of apparel for ten dancers, 5s. 8d.; for iron nails bought for the fitting up of the hall 6d.; and they gave to Robert, son of Thomas, for the hall and ornamenting the same, 3s. 4d.; and they gave to John Symond, for one man to hang up the burial things, 8d.; and they paid for a tent in part of payment 10s.; for paper bought for the accountant one farthing:— Sum, £3. 6s. 4d.

Sum of all the expenditure, £14. 17s. 10½d. and so the expenditure exceeds the receipts £1. 3s. 10½d. which ought to be paid by the sixty-seven brethren, viz. each of them 5d.; and thus there would remain 1s. 11½d. which the said brothers expended in wine before they departed; and so from the account nothing remains. Amen.

Memorand. de oib. necis. ptinentib. Gilde Sce. Trinitat.

Imprimis, una corona argentea deaurata; it un par de bedis de coralle; it 9 par de bedis de ambyr; it 3 par bed le gette; 2 par per iij. de le argent; it 2 par le bedis de coralle, cu 20 pr. mr. argentea; it pendent sup. pdcos. le bedis de ambyr, 3 ccifix et 3 annul

* Saffron was used in cakes.

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argeant; it 1 ccifix; it de singlis annul, 10 annul; it de duplicabuss brochis, 9 br.; it de broch cu lapid, 6 broch.; it de singlis annul cu lapidib. 8 annul; it un clochear argent, cu 9 par de le schmacherr de argent; it un ccifix duplic; it un cervm, cu capite deaurata; it un ryn. cu lapid; it un Jesu deaurat; it un vincl. cu ccifix; it 2 Agn. di de le argent; it un brochis de deaurat; it 1 broch; it 2 small brochis; it 1 pr bedis de beryll, cu ccifix et Maria imaginis; it 1 accer. qd. vocat Dowbyll W, cu corona; it 1 annul argent de aurata; it 4 labidib de chrystal et beryll; 1 branche de corall.

Memorandum of all the Necessaries belonging to the Guild of the Holy Trinity.

Imprimis, one crown, silver gilt; also one pair of beads of coral; also nine pair of beads of amber; also three pair of beads of jet; two pair for three of the silver ones; also two pair of beads of coral, with twenty silver; also, hanging over the aforesaid beads of amber, three crucifixes and three silver rings; also one crucifix; also of single rings, ten rings; also of double brooches, nine brooches; also of brooches with stones, six brooches; also of single rings with stones, eight rings; also one silver clasp, with nine pair of silver stomachers; also one double crucifix; also one stag with a gilt head; also one *ryn* with a stone, and one golden Jesu; also one chain, with a crucifix; also two Lambs of God of silver; also one gilt brooch; also one brooch; also two small brooches; also one pair of beads of beryll, with a crucifix and an image of the Virgin Mary; also one *accer*, which is called Dowbell W, with a crown; also one silver-gilt ring; also four stones of chrystal and a beryll; one branch of coral.

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In the fifteenth year of the reign of king Richard II. A.D. an act of parliament was passed, reciting the "Statute de 1393. "Religiosis," or Mortmain, (7th Edward I.) directing certificates to be made and returned of all lands, &c. of all religious places, guilds, and fraternities, and a license was henceforth to be obtained from the king to cause them to be amortysed, whereby these guilds became raised into higher importance.

Of the actual formation and establishment of the Wisbech guild, no particular record is preserved. The first and earliest notice is "the account of Adam "Reynald, the chaplain," as above stated; a lapse of forty-four years then succeeds, when the proceedings begin to assume more of regularity. A few, therefore, of the material orders progressively are transcribed, and though they may by many be esteemed unimportant, still, in detailing them, we must plead the apology of Hume, who well observes that, in reading history, trivial incidents, which shew the manners of the age, are often more instructive, as well as entertaining, than the great transactions of wars and negociations, which are nearly similar in all periods and in all countries of the world.

An inquisition was taken on the morrow of the Holy 1423. Trinity, anno dni. millo. ccccxxiij. and in the second year of the reign of Henry VI. by John Lambe, alderman, when it is recorded that the thirteen persons then assembled proceeded to elect into the office of

Clerks of the Market, or Skyvens,	Robert Saker, John Masse.
Clerk, ...	John Spencer.
Dean, ...	Walter Rokeland.
Chamberlain, ...	Simon Ryan.

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Orders. — It was then ordered, that each brother should have a hood, on pain of two pounds of wax.

Item. That all the brethren should dine together on the principal day.

That certain silver, paid into the hands of R. Claycroft and another, should be delivered to John Lambe, the alderman of the guild,—that is £ 10.

That four marks, which were paid into the hands of Richard Loke, should be taken and delivered to the said alderman.

That all the brethren of the said guild, who should have any silver or gold paid into their hands, should be discharged thereof on the principal day.

That the alderman should receive of John Tofty, of Elm, one pot, which Richard Barker gave to the said guild.

That the alderman should receive one dish, which was delivered into the hands of John Koope.

That one leaden vase be delivered into the hands of John Lambe.

Certain repairs were ordered to be done to the hall, and the workmen were paid fourpence per day.

Then follows an account of the monies received for the use of the hall by the clerks of the market, as there stated.

Walter Rokeland is named the dean of the guild before the altar.

There was then accounted for 3*s.* 6*d.* for the souls of eleven persons there enumerated, with expenses of wax.

Two or three brethren were called upon to be pledges for what should be delivered into the care of the alderman.

A.D. 1453. The brotherhood kept up an annual feast, which was held on what is there called "the Principal Day," presumed to be the feast of the Holy Trinity. Several

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items are stated of provisions to be procured, such as a calf and a lamb, the price of which was 2*s.* 6*d.* each, and a quarter of veal 4½*d.* and a minstrel was to be allowed. At this time there are said to have been twenty-three couples of brothers and sisters. An ordinance was also made this year, that all the brothers and sisters should come on the principal day into the hall,* viz. at the first and second vespers, and also at the great mass, and there sit with the alderman at church, according to ancient laudable custom, on pain of eight pounds of wax;† with a further order, that when it should happen that any brother or sister of the guild in the town of Wysebeche should decease, that all the brothers and sisters should come to church with the brother or sister deceased, to make prayer and offering for his or her soul, on pain of one pound of wax.

About the first year of Edward IV. some disputes appear to have arisen respecting the guild, but the brevity of the entries precludes any explanation. A.D. 1460.

It is said, advice was taken about the guild of the Holy Trinity, for which a fee was paid to a serjeant at law, of 6*s.* 8*d.* and to one John Brewode, of Ely, 3*s.* 4*d.* A silver chalice was purchased in this year, weighing

* There is no description amongst the records of the guild, so as to ascertain the spot where this hall was situated.

† There is a curious ancient assise for regulating the weights of tapers and candles used at Canterbury. The pascal taper (representing Christ, the chief of the church, the pillar of light, &c.) was to contain three hundred pounds of wax; the taper at the feasts, ten pounds; the processional ones, three pounds; that on the altar, one pound; those used daily in processions and masses, two pounds each. Bateley.

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twenty-nine ounces and a half, at 2*s.* 6*d.* per ounce:—amount, £3. 12*s.* 4*d.* There appear to have been several minor or lesser guilds, though all subject to the paramount one of the Holy Trinity; which inferior guilds were, by permission, allowed to make use of the hall:—their names were as follows, viz. that of

St. George.	St. Peter.
Corpus Christi.	St. Thomas.
The Cross.	St. Lawrence.
St. John the Baptist.	The Holy Virgin Mary.

The confidence placed by the public in these institutions acquired for them much popularity; and riches flowing in from various quarters by the donations of the opulent, the members were enabled to exercise
A.D. greater hospitality. In the first year after the ac-
1460. cession of Edward IV. a grand feast was ordered to be prepared; it might probably be on account of the result of the bloody battle of Towton,* between the rival houses of York and Lancaster. Whatever was the cause, a more splendid dinner than ordinary was this year provided on the principal day, and the viands were directed to consist of seven bushels of frumenty, six dozen of beer, twenty-four custards, and bokenard for pottage, and one stroke of veal for supper; lamb or mutton, with chickens or pigeons; and they should have in spices two shillings; and if they should order any more, they should pay for it out of their own purse;

* Edward was obliged to fight this battle before his coronation:—so desperate was the conflict, that no quarter was allowed; there fell 35,781 persons, and not one prisoner was taken but the earl of Devonshire. This event occurred on Palm Sunday.

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and also that they should have one minstrel. The expense of a calf is stated at 2*s.* 4*d.*; three lambs 3*s.* 6*d.*; five porkets 3*s.*; forty-four chickens 3*s.* 4*d.* As a proof of the increasing acquisitions of the guild, John Ketyll was this year appointed bailiff,* "to "direct, manage, and to farm" all the lands and tenements, assisted by two others; and the said John to have 16*s.*

Civil war now unhappily raged. This has been truly described as a time of trial for the bravest men of our country, who, instead of employing their courage in the defence of the land of their nativity, turned each man against his kinsman, and the dearest friends embraced opposite sides, and prepared to bury their private regard in factious hatred. In one of these unhappy battles, 5,000 bodies were found dead on the field: the cries of the fatherless, of the helpless orphan, and of the bereaved widow were heard on all sides: each man strove to rob his brother of his dwelling and of his property. During this long and sanguinary contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, (which lasted nearly forty years) Wisbech, indeed, did not participate in any of the eventful scenes, most of the desperate battles being fought in the more inland parts of the island. At this time, however, we remark a special and peculiar order, that the chaplain, after the offertory, should pray "for the good estate, tranquillity, and "peace of all the realm of England." The alderman and his brethren were this year directed to have a mornspeche (a meeting of a religious nature of the whole brotherhood) on the Friday before Trinity Sunday, at

* This is the first notice of the appointment of bailiff.

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seven o'clock in the morning, at the guild-hall. Sterrebridge fair is at this time spoken of as a mart well known, and the clerk and dean were ordered to provide against the principal feast certain wax shots and seven torches, and to buy wax at Sterrebridge fayre.*

A.D. 1475. As the possessions of the guild increased, the establishment was augmented. The officers on the election of this year are enumerated as follows:

One Alderman,
Two Skyvens, Scabini, or Stewards of the Hall,
Scribe,
Dean,
Two Storekeepers,
Server in the Hall,
Keeper of the Jewels.

And the salary of the bailiff of the lands was raised to £1. 6*s.* 8*d.* Although the vicarage had been endowed for more than two hundred years, this is the first year in which the name of "Vicar" occurs, when there was an order that all the jewels delivered should be put into safe keeping, with four keys, to be kept by the alderman, vicar, and two others. More regularity began

* The great mart called Sterrebridge fair, in the time of Fuller, is stated by him to be the largest in England. This fair is said to have originated from the circumstance of a clothier of Kendal having accidentally wetted his cloth in the river there, and exposed it to sale at a cheap rate. It is also said that the Irish merchants brought cloth and other goods to that emporium, in the reign of king Athelstan, A.D. 924. Be it as it may, (for it is impossible to pierce the veil of antiquity, and discover in what degree fiction is blended with fact) it is certain that Sterrebridge fair has long been a mart of great celebrity, and is still, at this day, well known and in reputation.

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now to be assumed by the guild as a corporate body, for on the same day it is recorded, that the common seal* was delivered to them, which is the first mention of any common seal being used. William Gybb is afterwards mentioned as perpetual vicar of the church of Wisbech; but other priests were appointed for the celebration of mass at the chapels within the said church, of which, that of the Holy Virgin is said to have been lately erected. The following memorandum also here occurs: "Mr. Thomas Barker, one of the exe-
"cutors of the last will and testament of Thomas Blower,
"came in his own proper person before William Gybbe,
"vicar of Wysebech, John Elwyn, and other co-fraters
"in the gild-hall of the Holy Trinity of Wysebech, the A.D.
"18th June, A. D. 1477, ac dni. reg. Edward IV. 16mo, 1477.
"and there granted, and in perpetual alms gave to the
"said gild of the Holy Trinity, to the honor of God
"omnipotent and the blessed Virgin Mary, for the
"salvation of the soule of the said Thomas Blower,
"one new edifice, called the Almshouse, built and
"situate in the New Market of Wysebech, next the
"church-yard of the church of St. Peter of Wysebech
"west,† the common way east, and abutts on a messuage
"of William Bennings north." There is also a further

* William the Conqueror introduced the use of seals from Normandy, and they were not employed by our Saxon ancestors. The use of seals may be traced in the pages of sacred and profane history from the most early periods. The first sealed charter is that of Edward the Confessor to Westminster abbey, which use he brought with him from Normandy, and then his seal was a cross; but common seals for boroughs were not generally introduced until the latter part of the reign of Edward IV. In the returns for the most ancient cities, including London, Winchester, and Canterbury, a common seal was not found before the reign of Edward IV. 1460. The great seal of England was first used in 1050.

† The almshouses on the north side of the church, called by many "King John's Almshouses," may perhaps be alluded to.

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memorandum, that William Gybb, perpetual vicar of the church of Wysebech, had granted to the guild a messuage, with the buildings and appurtenances, in the Old Market of Wisbech, in perpetual alms, for the soul of John Mass, alderman, and the souls of his wife and children, to celebrate a mass for the deceased, and distribute in alms to the poor, &c.

Certain ornaments for the altar of the Holy Trinity were directed to be delivered to the dean, and the altar itself to be prepared for the principal feast, "with nine "crowns and pannel with the jewels."

A.D. 1502. About the time of Henry VII. the term "Inquest," or "Inquisition," became altered to "Election," and called "Elecco Aldermanru;" when Richard Wyatt, the vicar of Wisbech, was admitted into the brotherhood, and paid for his admission 6*s.* 8*d.*; and an order was made, that no brother or sister should have his or her victuals and services at their own houses, without legitimate excuse, or by reason of illness, and this to be allowed by the alderman and his brethren; which was followed up by another order, that the presbyters belonging to the guild of the Holy Trinity of Wysebech, celebrating mass in the chapel of the Holy Trinity there, should celebrate the first mass at the sixth hour; the second at eight, and the third at their pleasure; and that the presbyters should appear in their surplices at all hours, to sing in the church of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul of Wysebech, viz. at first vespers, (complete) the matins; at other hours, mass, two vespers (complete); and at all other masses out of devotion in the said church, to sing, on pain of fourpence for every hour aforesaid, unless from illness or absence on a journey.

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In the following year, Mr. Wyatt, the vicar, was elected the alderman of the guild, and continued so for several successive years. Anciantly, the maintenance of the poor was chiefly an ecclesiastical concern; a fourth part of the tithes in every parish was set apart for that purpose; the minister had the chief direction in the disposal thereof, assisted by the churchwardens and other principal inhabitants. Afterwards, when the tithes of many of the parishes became appropriated to the religious houses, those societies paid some share likewise towards the relief of the poor, and the rest was made up by voluntary contributions: but the monasteries, which fed and supported a very numerous class, were the ordinary resource of the destitute. A.D. 1503.

In this year is an order, that the steward in the hall, and server at the kitchen board, should see every brother and sister honestly served in the hall, upon Trinity Sunday; and when the alderman and his brethren should have dined, that all the poor people there present should be set at a table in the said hall, and served with such meat as should be left; after this time, special directions are given for the poor to be set and served at an appointed table.* 1506.

Two persons were also nominated this year to serve the poor with meat and drink, on the Sunday of the Holy Trinity, with the fragments from the table of the alderman and brethren of the guild. 1508.

* When our Anglo-Saxon kings dined, the poor sat in the streets, expecting the broken meat. Edward I. relieved six hundred and sixty-six every Sunday, besides many on saint-days. *Thirteen*, from Christ and the apostles, was a favorite number. *Fosbrooke's Antiquities.*

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Most of the religious houses had a person under their control to superintend the education of youth; at this period, the office of schoolmaster first occurs, and although no entry is made previous to this of such an appointment, still it does not seem to be a new office, as the resolution runs in general words: "that *the "schoolmaster shall have from midsummer next eight "marks sterling for his wages.*" Ten acres of pasture in Fenland field were let for twenty years at ten shillings a year, and four persons were ordered to overlook the writings, and to ride about and view the lands of the guild.

A.D. 1513. In this year, an order was made for translating all the first statutes and ordinances of the guild, out of Latin into English; but these translations (if ever made) have not been preserved, so as to be handed down with the other records.

1514. In the following year, an order was made for two obits to be kept in the chapel of the Holy Trinity, *within the church of St. Peter and Paul of Wisbech*, with placebo, dirige, and mass of requiem; and more solemnities seem to have been used in the conduct and proceedings of the guild, and of the fraternity altogether, if we may judge from the directions then given, viz. for four torchetts of wax to be born before the alderman to and from church, and to burn in the hall at the time of grace and prayers' saying; and also to be born before every brother and sister of the guild to church at their death day, and to burn all the time of dirige and mass at the costs of the said guild, and born to church at the costs of the deceased; and that three priests should say mass;—the first in the chapel of the Holy

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Trinity at Wisbech at six o'clock; and another to sing mass by note in the chapel of our blessed lady there at eight o'clock; and the other of the said priests to say mass in the chapel of the Holy Trinity when disposed. And that none of the priests should on any occasion go out of town for a day and a night, without license of the alderman or his deputy.

The peculiarity of the following order is the apology for introducing it.

"It is ordered, that the chamberlains and bailiffs do A.D.
"provide four tapers of wax, to burn all the time while 1519.
"grace is saying, and each of them holding in their
"hands a pot of ale of a quarte; and when grace is
"ended, the said ale to be given to the people then
"present, according to the old ordinance."*

Great respect seems to have been paid to psalmody, and the manner of praising God by singing and chaunting; it being ordered, that no person should chaunt in a certain way, unless he were a priest, or should teach grammar or other exercise in the town of Wisbech.

The number of officers of the guild on the feast of the 1521.
Holy Trinity kept increasing, as appears by this year's election, (13th Henry VIII.) for after ordering that the steward of the guild should, upon the guild day before

* Asking people to drink in token of friendship is very ancient. The Greeks drank to one another. "Give us a Friend" is derived from them. The origin of the term "Toast" is uncertain, but was probably a mere metaphor, from a toast floating in a cup of liquor. *Fosbrooke's Antiquities*, vol. ii.

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mass, at the fetching of the alderman to church, provide a competent breakfast for the said alderman, brethren, and sisters of the guild, and all to have drink, at least, if they would;—they proceeded to appoint the following officers:

One Alderman,
One Dean,
One Clerk,
One Steward of the Hall—*Seneschall Aulæ.*
One Server in the Kitchen,
Two Cupbearers—*Ceph. Gerent.*
Two Scabini—*Servientes Pauperum.*
Two Chamberlains—*In Camar.*
One Bailiff—*In Ballivum.*
One Porter at the Door.

A.D. 1524. And it was ordered, that every brother and sister should give their attendance and come to the guild-hall every year, on the vigil of the Holy Trinity, and so go with the alderman from the said hall to church, to the first even-song of the said vigil; the next day to mass and even-song; and the next day to be at church at the dirige and mass of requiem, and there to pray and offer for all the founders, brethren, and sisters' souls of the guild, on pain, without lawful excuse, of one pound of wax.

Alexander Balam is here mentioned as the alderman.* Chamberlains were now appointed to look after the estates, then beginning to be of value and importance,

* The successors of this family afterwards resided at Elm, and continued to live there with great respectability for many years.

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whose orders were to ride and view all the lands, and note what charges were done and made by the bailiffs; and for the first time there is stated a particular of leases granted, by which it appears that the land consisted of one hundred and eighty-seven acres, let for £17. 5s.; among which are the forty acres in Emneth, in Meadowgate Lane, belonging to the capital burgesses at the present day, and which then let for £3. per annum: and it was ordered, that no man should be permitted to sell his lease, without consent of the alderman and twelve of the brethren.

The inquest seems now to have assumed a kind of judicial authority: we find them presenting two individuals for misusing the alderman in words, and amercing each of them 3s. 4d.

In more recent times, it has been a long established custom for the burgesses of Wisbech to present a purse of money, which of late years has been twenty guineas, to the lord bishop of the diocese on his primary visitation. This donation, which seems originally to have been a recognition of the bishop's authority as lord of the franchise, and to have been received as a mark of respect from ancient usage, is now returned by his lordship, to be disposed of towards some charitable foundation in the town. This year (25th Henry VIII.) a payment of £7. 6s. 8d. is stated to have been made to bishop Gooderick, on his first coming to Wisbech as bishop. A.D. 1534.

The time having now arrived when this country began to throw off its allegiance to the pope, the style and

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date of the meetings are altered, being now written as follows: "27th Henry VIII. by the grace of God "of England, France, and Scotland, King, Defender of "the Faith, Lord of Ireland, and on earth the supreme "Head of the English Church."

A.D. 1540. In this year passed the act for the dissolution of the monasteries; after which no further entry is made of the proceedings of the guild, though it appears to have existed as a body until the 24th of June 1547, when there is a record of monies received, amongst which occurs the expense of the alderman and three others to meet the commissioners at Ely.*

1547. 1st Edward VI.—The record of the last meeting of the guild which took place is as under:

John Prockter, *Alderman.*
Robert Scotred, *Bailiff.*
Henry Johnson, } *Chamberlains.*
William Day, }
John Baxter, *Steward in the Hall.*
George More, *Server.*
John Wilson, } *Cupbearers.*
Richard Spencer, }
William Andrew, } *Almoners.*
John Amlyn, }
John Knight, *Skevener.*
Edward Willis, *Clerk.*

* This was at the time the king's commissioners sat at Ely, for inquiring into the religious establishments.

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The proceedings of the guild conclude with an account of the lands and messuages in its possession A.D. 1551, many whereof are described as the gift of certain individuals there named, amongst whom is William Belman, who is said, "in honor of the Holy Trinity," to have built an eleemosynary house, called, in modern language, "a Gylde Hall." The whole possessions are then enumerated, which seem to have consisted of two hundred and seventy-seven acres and three roods of land, independent of the eleemosynary house, and an edifice called the almshouse, near the church-yard of the church of St. Peter, having a common way east, and the church-yard west, together with two other messuages, one of which was situated on the castle dyke.

The seal of the guild has not been preserved amongst the records of the present corporation. That they had a common seal, * and by virtue thereof exercised powers of acquisition and alienation is undoubted; a deed being still extant, to which the common seal of the fraternity, in good preservation, is appended, now in the possession of John Bellamy, Esq. to whom the compiler feels indebted, not only for the loan, but for permission to be allowed to take a drawing of the seal. The deed is dated 23d May 1537,† (29th Henry VIII.) being a release from Alexander Balam, alderman, and the co-fraters of the guild, to one Nicholas Peyrson, of all their right, for a valuable consideration, in a certain tenement, with the appurtenances, on the castle

* See page 116.

† This conveyance is contained in the limit of two hundred and thirty-six words;—a great contrast between such deed and the prolixity of modern conveyances.

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ditch in Wisbech. The seal is about two inches and three eighths in diameter, and has three human figures surmounting a castle, which, from the similarity to the engraving on the seal used by the governor in 1410,* leaves little doubt but it was the representation of the ancient castle of Wisbech. A shield is underneath the castle. The words "Sigillu Fratnitati' sive Gildæ —— "Trinitatis de Wysbech" surround the seal: † the adjective "Sanctæ" most probably supplied the chasm where the seal is mutilated.

The Dissolution of the Guild.

We are now arrived at that period when one of the most remarkable events in the history of this or any other country took place,—the reformation of our national church from the errors of popery. The foundation of this great revolution was laid in the reign of king Henry VIII.‡ but it was not finally completed until the time of Edward VI. when the doctrines of the reformation were established by law. Edward was little more than nine years old when he ascended the throne; Dr. Cox and Sir John Cheke§ were appointed his preceptors, names well known in the history of the reformation and of literature.

* See page 134.

† Mr. Hutchesson notices this same seal in his "Introduction to the "Charter," which, he there observes, is circumscribed with the words "Sigillum Communitatum Gildæ —— Trinitatis de Wysbeche," but, with every deference, it is submitted that the correct reading is as stated above.

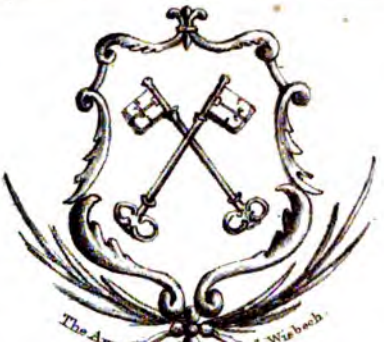
‡ King Henry VIII. is said to have suppressed 1,148 monasteries in England, whose revenue amounted to £183,707. per annum. The conduct of the greater abbeys appears to have been unexceptionable. Twenty-six mitred barons sat in the house of lords.

§ The learned Sir John Cheke was a native of Cambridge.

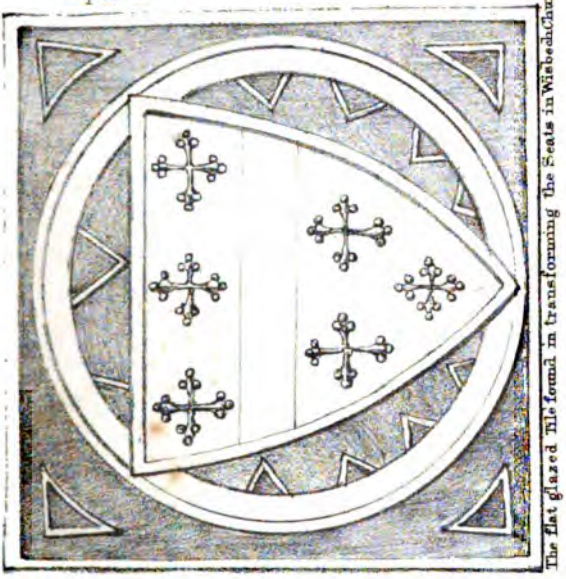
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Seal of the Corporation of Wisbech.



The Arms of the Town of Wisbech.



The flat glazed Tile found in transforming the Seats in Wisbech Church.



The Seal of Wisbech Guild.



The Governors Seal of Wisbech Castle in the possession of Sir C. Hotolville, of Duffield Hall, Derbyshire.

E. Mayle Del.

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Under this amiable young prince, the reformation proceeded without impediment.* One of the first acts in the new reign was to confer upon the king all chantries, free chapels, and colleges, which was done by the passing of an act, intituled, "An Act for "Chantries Collegiate;" whereby it was ordained— A.D. 1547.

First,—That the king should have and enjoy all lands theretofore by any person given, to be employed wholly to the finding a maintenance of any anniversary† or obit, or any light or lamp in any church.

Secondly,—That all fraternities and brotherhoods should be given to the king, with all the manors, lands, &c.

Thirdly,—That commissioners should be appointed to survey all the lay corporations, guilds, fraternities, and all the evidences and writings, &c.

Fourthly,—And that the same commissioners should have power to assign and appoint (in every place where any guild or fraternity, or the priest or incumbent of any chantry *in esse*, by the foundation or first institution thereof, should have kept a *grammar school*, or a preacher) lands, tenements, and other hereditaments, of every such chantry, guild, or fraternity, to remain, continue, and be in succession to a schoolmaster or preacher for ever, for and towards keeping of a grammar school or

* It has been observed, that the young king Edward VI. greatly resembled Josiah: he gave, indeed, singular evidence of wisdom and piety far beyond his years.

† Anniversaries were a sort of donations, for one or more year or years, to religious houses or the poor, for the good of the soul of the deceased.

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preaching, of and for such godly intents and purposes as the same commissioners or two of them should appoint.

And that such commissioners should execute the commission to him or them directed, beneficially towards the deans, masters, wardens, and other ministers, and towards the poor people; and also towards the maintenance of piers, jetties, walls, or banks against the rage of the sea, havens, and creeks.

And that the king should have all the goods, jewels, plate, ornaments, and other moveables of every such chantry to his use, &c.

By virtue of the above act of parliament, commissioners were appointed to execute the orders thereby directed; and two such commissioners being nominated for the purpose of making due inquiries into the constitution of the guild of the Holy Trinity belonging to the town of Wisbech, these, with the alderman and churchwardens, met at Ely, when the following articles were proposed, to which the answers are annexed.

The Articles.

A.D. 1548. The answer to the articles concerning the Trinity gild of Wisbech, according to the articles sent from the king's highness' commissioners, and delivered by Thomas Crosse, chief constable, made by John Austyn, Henry Rose, churchwardens, Thomas Preston, curate of the township of Wisbech, within the county of Cambridge, as hereafter doth follow, by order:

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Imprimis, one fraternitie or brotherhood founded within the church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, in Wysbech aforesaid.

Name:—The Trinitie Gyld.

The names of priests or chaplains thereto belonging, as followeth:

Mr. Henry Ogle, *Schoolmaster.*
Sir Nicholas Myller.*
Sir Thomas Cameron.
Sir Robert Lynde.

Item.—The said fraternitie was founded by s'tenn devott persons in the 2d year of king Richard II. and also confyrmed by divers of the king's most noble progenitors, and also confyrmed by the king's highness, in the twentieth year of his most noble reign.

Founded for a free school their, to educatt and bring up the youths;

And to preach the word of God;

And to celebrate other divine servis, praying for the king's majestie,† and for the preservation of this realme;

And to relieve s'teyne poor people, as more plainly doth apere by the foundation, &c.

The articles here break off abruptly. The next item is as follows:

* It was usual in those days to prefix the title of "Sir" to the names of a certain description of ecclesiastics, instead of "Reverend." Curates, chaplains, vicars, or rectors were styled Sir, or Dominus, to distinguish them from masters of arts, or magistri. *Nicholls' Anecdotes.*

† "Majesty" was never used until the time of Henry VIII.: "Grace" began about the time of Henry IV.; "Excellent Grace," under Henry V.

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It.—The said Thomas, and the other, to the first article, sayeth, there is *one chapel* within the said cure of Wisbech, at a place called *Murrow*, in the fen end of the same town, underneath the high Fendyke, named the Chapel of Corpus Christi; and to the same there is one stipendiary priest, whose name is Sir Robert Yorke.

It.—To the second article, they say that the said chapel of Corpus Christi was there set and founded nigh unto the said high Fendyke for one principal cause, that is, forasmuch as the said high Fendyke being in distance from the parish church four miles and more, and being a very payneful and noisome way, and commonly also insound, so that the inhabitants thereto adjoining are not able to ride or go to their head church, and the high Fendyke at this present day is so greatly charged with the fresh waters coming down from the shires of Huntingdon, Bedford, Northampton, Lesster, and the waters of Welland, so that there stands so great an head of the fresh water yearly against the said high Fendyke, the which is not only the defence and preservation of the towne of Wisbech, but also the preservation of fourteen towns adjoining unto the said town of Wisbech, and lying within the damage of the said high Fendyke, to the intent that the said Fendyke might be continually maintained and kept with and by the inhabitants inhabiting under the said high Fendyke, not only for the preservation of the said town of Wisbech, but also for the wealth and preservation of the said fourteen towns thereunto adjoining, the which is yearly in great danger and hazard of breach, unless as well the said inhabitants now inhabiting under the said high Fendyke, as all other inhabitants dwelling within any of the said fourteen towns, were not at all times ready at hand, as

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well by night as by day, at the rising of every flood and sudden storm, (it is yearly in experience) that if there were lacking but four men, all the rest shall not be able of their power to save and preserve the said high Fendyke without breach, for if any breach should chance for lack of man's help, (as God defend it from) the whole inhabitants of the town of Wisbech, and also the other fourteen towns thereunto adjoining, should be utterly and clearly undone and destroyed for ever. In consideration, and for that intent, the said high Fendyke being four miles and more from the said parish church of Wisbech, (as is before expressed) might be continually and for evermore the better preserved, maintained, and substantially kept, for the wealth and preservation of the aforesaid country,—the said chapel of Corpus Christi was sett and founded nigh unto the said high Fendyke, by the ancestors of Mr. Richard Everard, with the help of the inhabitants there dwelling at the time, as the inhabitants saith, having none other foundation, but that my lord bishop of Ely and his predecessors, from time to time, hath licensed and permitted the inhabitants there, for the causes before mentioned, to have a chaplain or priest there to minister and celebratt divine servis, as true Christian people ought to have; to the sustentation whereof, that the inhabitants of the said high Fendyke might the better be in rediness to give their attendance the more readily, certain of the inhabitants being deceased hath given to the said chapel certain lands, to remain from time to time in the hands of the chapelwardens, towards the finding of the said priest, as more plainly shall appear hereafter.

It.—To the third article, &c. Chapel.

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It.—To the fourth article, they say that all the profits of the said lands and tenements belonging to the said chapel are taken by the said chapelwardens, employing and expending of the same towards the finding a priest to celebratt divine servis to the inhabitants there.

There are no answers to the following articles until the twelfth, when it is said, there is now growing certain trees, in value to be sold, 3*s.* 4*d.*

Upon this inquiry by his majesty's commissioners, it was satisfactorily ascertained that the guild had supported a grammar school in the town of Wisbech, and likewise that a priest or incumbent of a chantry was *in esse*, and that certain piers, jetties, and banks were also maintained against the rage of the sea; whereupon the inhabitants of Wisbech lost no opportunity of availing themselves of the provisions of the before-mentioned statute; and having solicited the good offices of bishop Gooderick,* which they were fortunate in obtaining, his majesty was pleased to restore the possessions of the guild, on payment of a certain sum of money, and to raise the town into a corporation, as will be immediately hereafter shewn.

An account was ordered to be taken of the possessions of the late guild, which are stated to be as follows:

* Bishop Gooderick took an active part in promoting the reformation: he died at Somersham.

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RECAPITULATION.

Where situated.	Mess.	Gard.	Acres.	Clear Rental.	£.	s.	d.	Years' Purchase.	£.	s.	d.
No. 1.—Wisbech			349½	of Land	23	2	5½	at 20 years' purchase	462	9	2
Ditto	4	2		Messuages	1	3	4	at 10 years' purchase	11	13	4
No. 2.—Leverington			127	of Land	9	7	0	at 20 years' purchase	186	0	0
Ditto	1	1		House	0	4	4	at 10 years' purchase	2	3	4
Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.—Newton, Tid, Elm, Emneth, and Walton			69½	of Land	6	6	4	at 20 years' purchase	126	6	8
No. 8.—Walpole			70	of Land	6	0	0	at 20 years' purchase	120	0	0
Ditto	1	1		House	0	13	4	at 10 years' purchase	6	13	4
	6	4	616½	Carried forward	46	16	9½		915	5	10

Deduct Reprises as on the following side		18	13 7
		28	3 2½
Other reprises to the poor	£ 3 15 0		
Schoolmaster	10 6 8		
		14	1 8
Clear annual value		£ 14	1 6½

Reprises	£ 18	13	7
Other outpayments	14	1	8
Total	£ 32	15	3

at 20 years' purchase 654 15 0

The Consideration paid for the Charter, being 20 years' purchase on the clear sum of £ 14 1 6½ was £ 260 10 10

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	£.	s.	d.
The clear Rental as on other side brought forward	46	16	9½
Particulars of the Rents, Outgoings, and Annual Payments out of such Possessions, as follows: — per ann. £. s. d.			
The Lord Bishop of Ely, as of his Manor of Wysbech	3	17	9
The Dean and Chapter, as of the Manor aforesaid..	0	13	9
Galfred Norman	0	2	0
Rectory of Wysbeche	0	7	10
Nicholas Meggs	0	11	8
Darville	0	6	2
Godfred Colvylle, Esq.	0	0	8
Robert Bushey	0	0	6
Richard Everard, Gent.	0	2	3
Lady Mary, as of the aforesaid Manor	0	2	1½
Richard Hunstone	0	7	0
John Reppes	0	1	1
Christopher Langholme, Esq.	0	1	1
Simon Trone	0	0	1½
John Fynn	0	0	2
—— Haggard	0	5	1
	6	19	3
Rents going out of the Lands and Tenements aforesaid, for the Repairs of the Shores, Banks, and Annual Payments of the late Fraternity, to the Bailiff of the Hundred of Wisbech, in each year certain	10	14	4
To the Fee of the Bailiff, or Collector of the same	1	0	0
		18	13	7
	£28	3	2½
Memorandum—Out of the Possessions of the Guild was yearly distributed in relief to the Poore off the same Towne, the sum of	3	15	0
Also out of the said Possessions was yearly paid the Schoolmaster for his Wages, the sum of	10	6	8
		14	1	8
Clear Annual Value	£14	1	6½

My Lord Protector's Grace, upon the suyte of the Byshopp of Ely, was then pleased that the Inhabitants should be allowed the sums as of the King's Majesty's gyft, making together £28. 3s. 2½d.

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Therefore, deducting these charges from the above annual value, £46. 16*s*. 9½*d*., there would remain a clear income of £14. 1*s*. 6½*d*.; which, valued according to the rate in the before-going schedule of possessions, amounts to £260. 10*s*. 10*d*.—the consideration paid for obtaining the charter. And the king's majesty discharged the purchaser of all incumbrances, except leases and covenants in the same, and except the rents above mentioned. The purchaser was to have the issues from Michaelmas last, and to be bound for the woodd;—the lead, bells, and advowsons excepted.

(Signed) Richard Sakevyleth.
Wa. Mildemaye.
Robert Keylkey.
per Thomas Wreeme.

In order to draw a comparative view of the possessions of the guild, and the actual quantity of land at present enjoyed by the capital burgesses, the following statement is subjoined.

By the before-going schedule, it is shewn what possessions of the guild fell into the hands of king Edward VI. which his majesty re-granted to the inhabitants of Wisbech by his charter, for the purposes therein mentioned, which appears in the recapitulation to have consisted of six messuages, four gardens, and 616¼ acres of land, by estimation. Upon a personal view, taken in the year 1822, of all the lands then and now belonging to the body corporate, by the then town-bailiff, it appeared that their property in houses and lands consisted of one messuage, and 716A. 1R. 39P. of land, as follow:

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Possessions of the Guild re-granted to the Inhabitants by the Charter of King Edward VI.					Actual quantity of Land on a view made and taken thereof by the Town-Bailiff in 1822.				
Where situated.	Mess.	Gard.	Lands Arable & Pasture. ACRES.		Mess.	Gard.	Lands. A.	R.	P.
In Wisbech ..	4	2	349½	....			355	1	2
— Leverington	1	1	127	....			138	3	17
— Newton, a fishing cote, &c.*			7½	....					
—TiddSt.Mary's			6	....			6	0	0
— Elm.....			7	....			44	2	0
— Emneth			40	....			40	0	0
— Walton			9	....			17	0	3
— Walpole	1	1	70	....	1		114	3	17
	6	4	616½		1		716	1	39

	A.	R.	P.
Since the period of king Edward's Charter, several Allotments in Wisbech Fen have been set out to the Capital Burgesses, in right of their Messuages, &c. amounting to	47	0	0
Also, under the Walpole Inclosure and Marshland Smeeth and Fen Acts, several other Allotments, amounting to ..	28	3	17
The Capital Burgesses also purchased in Studmoreholme Field and West Newfield, in Walpole, in the year 1596	30	0	0
Ditto, in Walton, in 1820	2	2	0
There have also been set out for the Capital Burgesses, certain Allotments in Walton, containing.....	8	0	3
Which accounts for an increase of	A 116	1	20

* The fishing cote, and seven acres and three roods of land in Newton, are not at this time in the possession of the burgesses, nor does it appear among their recorded proceedings how this right or the land has been alienated.

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After the valuation of the possessions of the late guild, his majesty Edward VI. was pleased not only to re-grant the said guild estates, but to elevate the town of Wisbech into a CORPORATION, confirming the same to the inhabitants by virtue of the following Charter.

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CHARTA VILLE DE WYSBYCHE.

3° Ed. VI. A.D. 1549. EDWARDUS Sextus Dei Gratia Anglie Franc et Hibine Rex Fidei Defensor et in Terra Ecclie Anglicane et Hibine Supremum Caput omnibus ad quos presentes lre pervenerint saltm SCIATI QD nos tam pro suma ducentar sexaginta librar decem solidor et decem denarior legalis Monete Anglie ad manus Thesaurarii nri Curie nre Augmencacionii et Revencionum Corone nre ad usum nrm per dlcos nob Henricum Goodricke Armigerum Ricm Everard Armigerum Johem Sutton Nichm Fordham Johem Prockter Generosos Thomam Crosse Willm Beste Willm Perte Robertum Skorterede et Thomam Bocker Yomen inhabitantes Ville de Wysbyche infra Insulam Elien in Com nre Cantebr bene et fideliter persolut ac ad instanciam Reverend in Xro ptris Thome Elien Epi qui certis de causis et considerationib urgentib nos pro universo comodo et communi utilitate Insule predict moventibs et instigatib volumus et ex certa scientia et mero motu nris necnon de avisamento precharissimi Avunculi et Consiliarii nri Edwardi Ducis Soms Persone nre Gubnatoris et Regnor Dnor Subditorq nror Protectoris ac

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CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF WISBECH.

EDWARD the Sixth, by the grace of God of England, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and on Earth of the English and Irish Church, Supreme Head, to all to whom these present letters shall come, greeting:—KNOW YE that we, as well for the sum of two hundred and sixty pounds, ten shillings, and ten pence, of lawful money of England, into the hands of the Treasurer of our Court of our Augmentation and Revenues of our Crown to our use, by our beloved Henry Gooderick, Esquire, Richard Everard, Esquire, John Sutton, Nicholas Fordham, John Prokter, Gentlemen, Thomas Crosse, William Beste, William Perte, Robert Skorterede, and Thomas Bocker, Yeomen, inhabitants of the Town of Wysbyche, within the Isle of Ely, in our County of Cambridge, well and truly paid; and at the instance of the Reverend Father in Christ, Thomas, Bishop of Ely, who for certain urgent causes and considerations for the general advantage and common benefit of the Isle, us moving and exciting,—do will, and of our knowledge and mere motion, also by the advice of our most dearly beloved Uncle and Counsellor, Edward, Duke of Somerset, the Guardian of our Person, and of our Kingdoms, Dominions, and Subjects, Protector, and 3d Ed. VI. A.D. 1549.

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ceteror Consiliarior nror pro nob Hered et Successorib nris per psentes concedimus inhabitantib Ville de Wysbyche predict qd dicti inhabitantes predict Ville de Wysbyche *de cetero* sint et erunt in re facto et noie unm corpus et una coiatas de se impptm incorporat per nomen Inhabitantium Ville de Wysbyche infra Insulam Eliens in Com Cantabr ac ipos inhabitantes predict Ville per nomen Inhabitantium Ville de Wysbyche infra Insulam Elien in Com Cantabr per presentes incorporamus ac Corpus Corporat imppetr duratur realiter et ad plenum creamus exigimus ordinamus discernimus dclamus facimus et constituimus per presentes Et qd heant et hebunt successionem perpetuam Et qd heant coe Sigillum pro negociis suis agend deservitur Ac etiam qd sint per idem nomen persone habiles et capaces in lege ad perquirend accipiend recipiend et habend tam de nob Mesuagia Terras Tenementa Prata Parcua Pasturas ac cetera omnia et singula in his lris nris patent express et specificat qm de quibuscunque aliis personis et alia persona quacumque Maneria Terras Tenementa ac Hereditamenta quacumque hend et tenend successorib suis impptm Ac etiam de gracia nra speciali et ex certa scientia et mero motu nris necnon de avisamento predict ac pro causis et considerationib supradictis dedimus et concessimus ac per presentes damus et concedimus prefatis inhabitantib de Ville de Wysbyche infra Insulam Eliens in Com Cantebr omnia illa Mesuagia Terras Tenementa Prata Pascua Pastur et Hereditamenta nra quacumq scituat jacen et existen in Villis Campis

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of other our Counsellors, for ourselves, our Heirs and Successors, by these presents have granted to the inhabitants of the Town of Wysbyche aforesaid, that the said inhabitants of the said Town of Wysbyche *from henceforth* may and shall be in fact and in name, one Body and one Community of themselves for ever incorporated, by the name of the Inhabitants of the Town of Wysbyche, within the Isle of Ely, in the County of Cambridge; and the said inhabitants of the Town aforesaid, by the name of the Inhabitants of the Town of Wysbyche, within the Isle of Ely, in the County of Cambridge, we have by these presents incorporated, and a Body Corporate for ever to remain, really and fully have created, established, ordained, determined, declared, made, and constituted by these presents; and that they may and shall have perpetual succession; and that they may have a Common Seal to be serviceable for transacting their affairs; and also that they should be by the same name persons fit and capable in law to acquire, take, receive, and have, as well of us the Messuages, Lands, Tenements, Meadows, Feedings, Pastures, and all and singular other things in these our letters patent expressed and specified, as from all other persons whomsoever, and any other person whatsoever, Manors, Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments whatsoever, to have and to hold of our successors for ever. And also of our special favor, and of our certain knowledge and mere motion, also by the advice aforesaid, and for the causes and considerations above mentioned, we have given and granted, and by these presents do give and grant to the said inhabitants of the Town of Wysbyche, within the Isle of Ely, in the County of Cambridge, all those our Messuages, Lands, Tenements, Meadows, Feedings, Pastures, and Hereditaments, wheresoever situated, lying and being in the Towns, Fields,

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et Parochiis de Wysbyche Leverington Newton et Elme in dco Com Cantebr ac in Tyde Sce Marie in Com nro Lincoln ac in Emnethe West Walton et Walpole in Partib de Marsheland in Com nro Norff que sunt vel nuper fuerunt in seperalibus tenuris sive occupationib Thome Drabbe, Martin Person Thome Tooke Willi Salabanke Johis Martinson Roberti Tego Thome Crosse Johis Prockter Roberti Scortred Alani Jekyn Edwardi Archure Johis Knyght Hamonis Adam alias Stephynson Radulphi Rychardson Rici Dodynge Pauli Appuliarde alias Applyarde Agnetis Warner Roberti Osbourne Katherine Wynde Johis Rayner sen Willi Perte Johis Austyne alias Augustyne Rici Lorde Agnetis Robynson vidue Nich Peerson Roberti Balam Generosi Willi Thomason Willi Chadwell Willi Dryver Johis Tego jun Willi Bryan Generos Thome Toke Simonis Trone Johis Fyn alias Fyne Thome Palmer Thome Pyckarde Johis Sheparde Edwardi Wilkes et Henrici Goodricke Armigeri seu eorum alicujus seu assign eor alicujus necnon Reversiones quascunque et singular premissor et cujus de parcelle ac redditus et annualia proficua quecumque reservat super quibuscunq dimissionib et concessionib fact de Premissis seu de aliqua inde parcell quequidem Mesuagia ac cetera Premissa nuper pertinebant seu spectabant Fraternitatis sive Gilde Sce Trinitatis in Wysbyce predicta et ad manus nros nuper inter alia devenerunt et devenire debuerunt virtute cujusdam Actus Parliamenti anno regni nri primo inde inter alia edit et provis et que quidem Mesuagia ac cetera Premissa cum suis pertinen modo extenduntur ad clarum annuu valor viginti octo libr trio solidorum duorum denariorum et unius oboli habendum et tenendum

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and Parishes of Wysbyche, Leverington, Newton, and Elm, in the said County of Cambridge, and in Tyde St. Mary's, in our County of Lincoln, and in Emnethe, West Walton, and Walpole, in the Country of Marshland, in our County of Norfolk, which are or late were in the separate tenures or occupations of Thomas Drabbe, Martin Person, Thomas Tooke, William Salabanke, John Martinson, Robert Tego, Thomas Crosse, John Prokter, Robert Scortred, Alan Jekyn, Edward Archure, John Knight, Hamon Adam alias Stephynson, Ralph Richardson, Richard Dodyng, Paul Appuliarde alias Applyarde, Agnes Warner, Robert Osbourne, Katherine Wynde, John Rayner, senior, William Perte, John Austyne alias Augustyne, Richard Lorde, Agnes Robynson, widow, Nicholas Peerson, Robert Balam, Gentleman, William Thomason, William Chadwell, William Dryver, John Tego, junior, William Bryan, Gentleman, Thomas Toke, Simon Trone, John Fyn alias Fyne, Thomas Palmer, Thomas Pyckarde, John Sheparde, Edward Wilkes, and Henry Goodrick, Esquire, or any of them, or any of their assigns; also all Reversions whatsoever of all and singular the Premises, or any parcel thereof, and the Rents and annual Profits whatsoever, reserved upon any demises and grants made of the Premises, or of any parcel thereof, which said Messuages and other Premises lately belonged or appertained to the Fraternity or Guild of the Holy Trinity of Wysbyche aforesaid, and to our hands lately amongst other things came, and ought to come, by virtue of a certain Act of Parliament in the first year of our reign on that occasion, amongst other things declared and provided; and which said Messuages and other Premises, with their appurtenances, are now extended to the clear annual value of twenty-eight pounds, three shillings, and twopence farthing;* to have and to hold

* See Schedule of Possessions, page 169.

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omnia et singular predict Mesuagia Terras Tenementa Prata Pascua Pasturas et cetera Hereditamenta ac alia Premissa cum pertinent prefat inhabitantib predict. Ville de Wysbyche et successoribus nris impptm ad propriu opus et usum eorum inhabitantiu et successor suor impptm tenend de nob hered et successorib nris ut de Manerio nostro de Estegrenewyche in Com nro Kanc in socagio et non in capite videlt per fedelitatem tantum pro omnib serviciis reddit et demand quibuscumq Ac etiam de gratia nra speciali ac de avisamento predicto damus et concedimus pfatis inhabitantib predict Ville omnia Exitus Revencoes et Proficua omn predicor Messuagiorum Terrar Tenementar et ceteror Hereditamentor a festo Sci Michis ult preterit hucusq provenien sive crescen per manus tenen et occupator eorum solvend Hend eisdem inhabitantib ex dono nro speciali absque *compoto* seu aliquo alio proinde nob aut hered nris reddend solvend vel faciend Et ulterius volumus ac per presentes pro nob hered et successorib nris concedimus prefatis inhabitantib pdce Ville de Wysbyche qd inhabitantes dce Ville familiam ibidem foventes aut tot eor qui voluerint in prime die Novembr qui erit in anno dni millimo quingentissimo quinquagesimo licite et impune convenire possint in quadam domo scituat in pdca Ville de Wysbyche vulgariter vocat the Comon Hall ac ibidem per seipsos et maiorum numeror eor dcm inhabitanciu dca Ville familiam ibidem foventes ac tunc presentes in eadem domo noiare et eligere decem viror de meliorib probiorib et magis discrecionib inhabitant infra dict Villam de Wysbyche ac familiam ibidem foven ad intencoem

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all and singular the said Messuages, Lands, Tenements, Meadows, Feedings, Pastures, and other Hereditaments, and all other the Premises, with the appurtenances, to the said inhabitants of the said Town of Wysbyche, and to their successors for ever, to the proper use and behoof of the said inhabitants and their successors for ever, to be holden of us, our heirs and successors, as of our Manor of East Greenwich, in our County of Kent, in socage, and not in capite, viz. by fealty only, instead of all services, rents, and demands whatsoever; and also we have of our special grace, and by the advice aforesaid, given and granted to the said inhabitants of the said Town, all Issues, Revenues, and Profits of all the said Messuages, Lands, Tenements, and other Hereditaments, from the feast of St. Michael last past, howsoever proceeding or accruing, by the hands of the tenants and occupiers thereof to be paid, to be holden to the said inhabitants of our special gift, without any *reckoning* or any other thing from henceforth to us or our heirs to be rendered, paid, or done; And further we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, have granted to the said inhabitants of the said Town of Wysbyche, that the inhabitants of the said Town there maintaining a household, or so many of them as shall be willing, on the first day of November which will be in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and fifty, lawfully and without damage, may assemble in a certain house in the said Town of Wysbyche, commonly called the Common Hall, and there, by themselves or the major number of them the said inhabitants of the said Town there maintaining a household, and then present in the said house, to nominate and choose ten men of the better, more honest, and more discreet inhabitants within the said Town of Wysbyche, and there maintaining a family, to the intent

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et propositum qd iidem decem viri sic noi et electi ac supervivent eor deinde in tempore in tempus usq primu diem Novembris qui erit in anno dni millimo quinquengesimo quinquagesimo hebunt plenariu potestatem et auctoritatem concedend et dimittend ad firmam pro inhabitantib dce Ville ac in noibs inhabitanciu ejusdem Ville per indenturas sive indenturam unam partem inde sigilland et Sigillo Coe inhabitanciu dce Ville Maneria Terras Tenementa et cetera Hereditamenta inhabitanciu dict Ville vel aliquas parcellas sive parcellam inde ad eor libitum pro termino viginti annor vel pro minori numero annor ac reservend super qualibet tali concessione et dimissione antiquum redditum inde vel plus Ac ad consentione pro oib inhabitantib dce Ville pro talibus concessionib et dimissionib infra dict tempus fiend necnon a pdco primo die Novembr pdco anno dni millimo quingentisimo quinquagesimo usq prim diem Novemb in pdco anno dni millimo quingentisimo quinquagesimo primo hend curam et administracoem omn Manerior Terrar Tenementor et ceteror Hereditamentor pdcor inhabitantiu ac rerum et negociorum suor quoscumq Ac etiam per idem tempus reparand supvidend et gubernand Maneria Tesrar Tenementa et cetera Hereditamenta ad coem utilitatem pdictor inhabitanciu

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and purpose that the said ten men so nominated and elected, and the survivors of them hereafter from time to time, until the first day of November which will be in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and fifty, shall have full power and authority to grant and let to farm for the inhabitants of the said Town, in the names of the inhabitants of the said Town, by indentures or indenture, one part thereof to be sealed with the Common Seal of the inhabitants of the Town aforesaid, the Manors, Lands, Tenements, and other Hereditaments of the inhabitants of the said Town, or any parcels or parcel thereof, at their pleasure, for the term of twenty years, or for a less number of years, and to reserve upon every such grant and demise the old rent or more, and to consent for all the inhabitants of the said town, for such grants and demises within the said time to be made; also from the aforesaid first day of November in the aforesaid year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and fifty, until the first day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and fifty one, to have the care and administration of all the Manors, Lands, Tenements, and other Hereditaments of the aforesaid inhabitants, and of their matters and affairs whatsoever; and also during the same time to repair, overlook, and manage the Manors, Lands, Tenements, and other Hereditaments, for the common benefit of the said inhabitants.

Then follow certain clauses, empowering the inhabitants, maintaining a family, to meet on the first of November, to elect ten men maintaining families, who, being so elected, are to have authority to let to farm, by indenture, for twenty or a less number of years, the lands and hereditaments before mentioned, for the inhabitants of the said town, and in their names; and who are to

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have the care and administration of all such lands and of their affairs, and to manage them for the common benefit of the inhabitants: such ten, on being elected, not to remain, unless within one year after being elected, they shall be elected anew; — with license for the inhabitants to acquire and enjoy other messuages, &c. to the value of £100, or under the same value; to implead in any action, and to lease, grant, sell, and exchange such lands. And for the good government and administration of the lands, the ten men are empowered to meet and summon so many and such of the more discreet and honest men there maintaining families, for the purpose of consulting about their matters and affairs touching the public good; with a clause, that a schoolmaster, with a salary of £12. should be provided,—the bishop of Ely to be visitor; and a direction that the said inhabitants, and their successors, should distribute amongst the poor annually £3. 15*s*. and maintain such and the like sea shores, banks, and streams, as the guardians and brethren of the late guild ought and were accustomed to do. Henry Goodrick, Richard Everard, Esquires, and eight others, are then nominated to be the first ten to execute all matters to the first day of November 1550;—with the following conclusion:

Volumus etiam pro consideracoe predict ac de avisamento pdco per presentes concedimus pfatis inhabitantib pdce Ville de Wysbyche qd heant et hebunt has Lras nras Patentes sub magno Sigillo nro Anglie debito modo fact et sigillat absq fine seu feodo magno vel parvo nob in Hanaperio nostro seu alibi ad usum nrm quoque modo reddend solvend vel faciend Eo qd expressa nuncio de vero valore annuo aut de certitudine

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We will also, for the consideration aforesaid, and by the advice aforesaid by these presents have granted to the said inhabitants of the aforesaid Town of Wysbyche, that they may and shall have these our Letters Patent, under our Great Seal of England, in the appointed manner made and sealed, without fine or fee, great or small, to us in our Exchequer, or elsewhere, to our use in any manner to be rendered, paid, or done, so that express mention of the true annual value, or of the certainty of

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Premissorum sive eorum alicujus aut de aliis donis sive concessionib per nos vel per aliquom progenitor prox prefatis inhabitantib pdce Ville de Wysbyche aut hec tempora fact in presentib minime fact existit aliquo statuto actu ordinacoe provisione sive restriccoe inde in contrarium fact edit ordinat sive provis aut aliqua alia re causa vel materia quacumq in aliquo non obstat In cujus rei testimonium has Lras nras fieri fecimus Patentes Testo nro ipo apud Westmonasterium primo die Junii anno Rni nri tertio

Per ipm Regem

CONTHWETT

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the Premises, or any of them, or from any other gifts or grants by us, or by any our next progenitors to the aforesaid inhabitants of the said Town of Wysbyche, before these times made, in these presents be not made by any statute, act, ordinance, provision, or restriction, to the contrary thereof made, set forth, ordained, or provided, or any other thing, cause, or matter whatsoever in any wise notwithstanding: — In testimony whereof we have caused these our Letters to be made Patent. Witness ourself at Westminster, the first day of June, in the third year of our Reign.

By the same King,

CONTHWETT.

Proceedings of the Body Corporate after the Grant of Edward the Sixth's Charter.

By this charter, the inhabitants of Wisbech are declared to be in substance, deed, and name, *One Body*, incorporated by the name of "*The Inhabitants of the "Town of Wisbech,*" within the isle of Ely, in the county of Cambridge; by which style they were to have perpetual succession, with a common seal, and power for the inhabitants to enjoy in perpetuity the real estates in the letters patent expressed. And a grant of confirmation was thereupon made to the inhabitants, of the estates comprised in the aforesaid schedule,* lying in Wisbech, Leverington, Newton, and Elm, in the county of Cambridge; Tid St. Mary, in the county of Lincoln,

* See page 169.

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and Emneth, Walton, and Walpole, in the county of Norfolk. A school was directed to be maintained, with a salary to the master of £12. and power to distribute amongst the poor annually for ever £3. 15*s*.

Bishop Gooderick's friendly offices appear to have been exerted in favor of the inhabitants of Wisbech, not only in obtaining the re-grant of the possessions, but also the restoration of a portion of the plate and splendid ornaments heretofore accustomed to be used in the Romish worship, which were sold for the benefit of the town, as shewn by the following entry, and the money was disposed of for public purposes.

A.D. 1549. *Wisbech, in the Isle of Ely*, 1549. *Memorandum.*—Sold by us, Robert Stregytt and Thomas Butcher, churchwardens, Richard Everard, Esq. and sixteen other parishioners of the said towne of Wisbech, with the consent of all the residue of the same parishioners, at London, to two goldsmiths, the parcels of plate as follows:

	OUNCES.
First, a Cross of Silver-gilt	79¼
It. A Pyke of Silver, parcel-gilt ..	12¼
A Pair of Saucers, Silver	37
Sheppi of Silver, parcel-gilt	13
A Chalice	30
A Pipe of Silver for the Cross Staffe	20
	oz. 192

Which sold for 4*s*. 8*d*. per ounce, amounting to £44. 16*s*.; this sum, with much more money, was employed as followeth:

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	£.	s.	d.
Paid for costs and charges of thirty-seven men sent to Lynne to serve the king's majesty in his affayres against the rebels in Norfolk *, for their coats, doublets, boots, and other their apparel, with 6*s.* 8*d.* every of them in their purses..	28	9	8
Paid for making of the gowte and sluice at the little Eau, with brick, timber, and workmanship	10	11	0
Paid for certain reparations done upon the Church	4	5	0
Paid for lead, timber and workmanship of the cross in the Market Place	4	3	4
Paid for paving of the Market Place, and for rag stone, sand, and workmanship	17	2	2
Paid for making of a bank and sluice to keep out the salt water from surrounding our common fens, and for the preservation of the fresh water for our cattle	9	14	4
	£74	5	6

Payments exceed the receipts £29. 9*s.* 6*d.* as testified by Richard Everard and nine other parishioners.

* This was in the time of the rebellion of the two Ketts, Robert and William, at Norwich. The first occasion of it was, because divers lords and gentlemen, who were possessed of abbey lands and other large commons and waste grounds, had caused many of those commons and wastes to be inclosed, whereby the poor and indigent people were much offended. The rebels under the Ketts had a camp at Norwich, and a lesser one at Rising Chase, and had at one time increased to 20,000 men, but were at

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It may be generally supposed that the first acts of the corporate body would have been preserved with more than ordinary care, but there is an unaccountable silence for fifteen years. This may indeed have proceeded from some subsequent loss of the records; the real cause, however, must now be left to conjecture.

Within this space of time entries are made of certain letters from the queen's majesty, as well as from bishop Cox *, the quaintness in language of the latter may probably afford amusement. We shall commence with the notice of a letter of queen Elizabeth, directed to John Gallant, the bailiff of Wisbech, and all other the bishop's tenants resident within Wisbech hundred, dated 12th May 1561. After reciting that there were matters in variance between the queen's tenants at Sutton, and the bishop of Elye, his tenants, — it orders that the inhabitants of Wisbech hundred, on pain of £500. should suffer the tenants of Sutton peaceably to occupy their common, and to have free egress and regress coming and going to the towne of Wisbeche, without interruption, until they prove themselves, before the chancellor, to have a good title to the premises in dispute.

This seems to allude to some claim made by the bishop's tenants within Wisbech hundred, to a right of

length subdued by the earl of Warwick, (afterwards, upon the overthrow of Somerset, duke of Northumberland) though not without loss of many worthy persons, both gentlemen and some of the chief citizens of Norwich. In all 300 of the rebels were executed. The Ketts were carried to London, committed to the tower, arraigned of high treason, found guilty, and brought down to Norwich. Robert was there executed on the top of the castle, and William on the top of the steeple of Wymondham church. *Blomefield*, v. iii. p. 257.

* He was also Chancellor of Oxford in the year 1559.

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intercommoning with the inhabitants of Long Sutton,* in the county of Lincoln, and which the following note from 'Prynn's Abridgement of the Records in the Tower of London' may in some degree elucidate.

3d. Hen. VI. John Fordham, bishop of Ely, in affidavit against John Baldward of Sutton and others, recovered 4,000 acres of marsh in Wisbech.—It is enacted that the execution of the said recovery should stay unto a certain time, and that before the said time, there should be a perambulation made between the shires of Lincoln and Cambridge, by which, if it fell out that any of the premises were within the county of Lincoln, that then neither the said bishop, nor any of the tenants within Wisbech hundred, should claim any common or pasture, or any of the same found; and contrarily, that the said Baldward and other tenants of Sutton should claim no common in any of the premises found to be within the county of Cambridge.

Bishop Cox's Letter to his Tenants of Doddington and Marche then follows.

I am sorry to hear that ye are so stoute, so disordered, and so lawless people, that neyther the order of me or my counsell can stay you. I understand ye fall to your olde practyse, please yourselves in your own devices, go contrarye to your own agreements, and pynne your neighbours cattle. Sithe ye be at yt poynte, I ensure what A.D. 1560.

* Probably Wisbech fen and Sutton St. Edmund's common, which adjoin each other. It is stated by Atkins, that there was a confirmation, by a final concord between the inhabitants of Sutton and the inhabitants of the hundred of Wisbech, for the division of Wisbech high fen, in the 5th Elis.

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the lawe will give me, that I intend to use roundly against you. Say not but ye have had warnynge. So fare ye well. From Downham * the 8th April.

Your's,

R. Ely.

To my Tenants at Doddington and Marche.

The one which follows is from the same bishop, and relates to certain disputes relative to Norwood common.

To my Tenants and Inhabitānts of my Town of Doddington and March give these.

A.D. 1561. I comende me unto you; whereas I pceyve upon complts off the tenants and inhabitants of Wisbeche hundred, that you nowe lately without respecte or regarde unto such ordre as I and my counsell dyd take betweene you and them for the quyet using of their common in the common called Norwood, with theire beasts and cattle without let, disturbance or interupcon of you or any of them, until such time as upon the hearing of the matter between them and you, for the right and title thereof, further order should be taken according as to right sholde apptaine, by pvse counsel have distrayned there beasts and cattle co-trarie to my said ordre, whereby I do right well pceyve that you nether regarde me nor yet my doings in that behalf, wch I will not forget, as you may well assure yorself off. Therefore I will, and on our queens majestys behalf straightly charge you, and also your adherents, peaceably to prmit and suffer the said tenants and inhabitants of Wysbeche hundred to occupye and enjoye there said common without distrayning of there

* The bishops of Ely had formerly a palace at Downham in the isle.

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cattle, or other disturbance to be made by you or any of you, in as ample manner as they heretofore have hadd at any time within this twenty yeare last past, as you will avoyde the further displeasure that hereafter may ensnue doing the contrarie. Thus fare ye well. From my house at London the 4th day of April 1561. Ao 4to Dne Rne Eliz.

RICHARD ELY.

There is a will also amongst the corporation records, affording a striking picture of the superstition of the times, which is entered in the appendix to this work.

After a lapse of fifteen years, the following record occurs: Memorandum, that on the 1st of November 1564, (6th queen Elizabeth) the greater number of the inhabitants of the town of Wisbech elected and nominated ten men, of the more honest, within the town aforesaid, maintaining a household, for the good government and order of all the lands and tenements belonging and appertaining to the town of Wisbech aforesaid, and being a body corporate, by virtue of letters patent from the late lord king Edward VI. granted, for the future year, viz. to the 1st of November next following: A.D. 1564.

Richard Everard, Esq.	Thomas Butcher, Carpr.
Robert Scotred.	William Day.
Robert Best.	Nicholas Mychell.
Edward Wilkes.	Alexander Coxon.
Edward Storeye.	Henry Markham.

On the following day (2d November) the ten men met in common hall, and chose Richard Best (not named amongst the ten) to be *Baley*, for the receipt of all rents of the lands and tenements belonging to the body corporate

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of the Town of Wysbech for the year to come, with direction that he was to lay out no money without the consent of the ten men, and he was to have a salary of £1. 6*s*. 8*d*. Mr. Rastall, schoolmaster, was to have for his stipend £13. 6*s*. 8*d*. One Humphrey Turner was to have £3. 6*s*. 8*d*. for a stipend for singing and maintaining God's service in the church for his year, and to do his duty as before. Two other small stipends were also granted. One Philip Wright was appointed to be the waytt of the town, and to have £1. 13*s*. 4*d*. and a scavenger * was appointed for the Market Stede, the Corn Market, and Deadman Lane, and to have 10*s*. and to "collect and gather the devotion" of the inhabitants besides. Edward Wilkes was to be the clerk or register of the baley's accounts, with a fee of 10*s*. per annum. The record concludes with the following order:

Itm. We will and ordeyne, according to the tenor of the king's letters patent, that none be chosen to be of the tenne, but such as be most discreyt, sobre, and most substancyall men, inhabityng within the said town; and such as kepeth hospitalytye, and may dispende by theire fre lands or tenements lying within the said town 40*s*. by the year, over and above all charges.

Richard Best is then stated to have passed his accounts before the ten men and other inhabitants of the town.

After which is a "kalendar" of the leases, and an inventory of the implements belonging to the body

* This is the first notice of the appointment of scavenger.

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corporate, remaining in the town hall chamber, and delivered to Richard Best, the baley, for safe keeping, viz.

Pewter dishes and platters, in all twenty-eight pieces.
Three long spytts for the kitchen chimney.
A corslet complete.
One halman ryoyt, viz. the breast and backe.
One coat of playt and four jackets.
One bow, and half a sheaf of arrows with cayse for them.
Four bylls and a skulle.
Eight sydes of windows, late standing in the hall windows.

It seems that ten men, agreeably to the charter, were annually elected on 2d November, and the vicar and schoolmaster, with several other of the respectable inhabitants, were generally added to that number, who met on the first Tuesday in every month, to hear and settle all disputes amongst their neighbours, and afterwards dined together, sometimes at one house and sometimes at another, at a moderate stipulated expense. The compact by which they bound themselves to meet, and the amiable purpose and object of their meeting, are thus recorded:

Wisbyche infra insul. } Anno nono dne nre Regine. A.D.
Elien. in com. Camb. } This boke mayd the 11th Novr. 1567.
Ao. pd by the advisse and consent of the tenne men of the body corporate of the towne of Wisbyche aforesaid, and of divers other worshipful and of the best and most discrete, sobre, and wisest honest men of the same towne,

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to the honor, laude and prayse of Almighty God. And for the good government of the com'nwealth of the said towne. And also for the avoiding of stryffe, contencon and debate bet ptye and ptye, and for the encrease of love, amitye and frendshippe, to be had and continued at all times hereafter bet the inhabitants afsd, according to the grant made unto the aforesd tenne men and other, at the suyte and requeat of the reverend father in God, Thomas Goodericke, late bishop of Ely, by the late king of most famous memorie, king Edward 6th, whose soule God preserve, *for the onely encrease of love, amitie and concord, to be had and continued amongst the foresaid inhabitants of Wisbyche hereafter.*—It is concluded, condescended and fullye agrede by the tenne men of the foresaid towne, with the advice of the others of the inhabytants of the same towne, that they, and other whose names be hereunder written, shall assemble and meet together in the common hall of the same towne every monthe during one whole year, for the only intent and purpose above declared. And to dyne together at such place as shall be agreed upon by consent, and to pay for theire dinners every person four-pence and no more, and that he yt is absent to pay four-pence for his dinner as yff he were present. In witness whereof these persons, whose names be hereunder written, for the corroberacon of this good and godly order, have set theire hands the day and yeare first above written. Then follow the signatures of Mr. Hugh Margesson, vicar, the tenne men, the schoolmaster, and about twenty other persons.

On their decision of any matter in dispute, it is usually entered thus :

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Anno nono Rne Eliz. } The assemble and metynge of the tenne men of the body corporate of the
Wisbyche Town. } said town of Wisbyche, and other of the best, sobre, and most discrete men of the same towne, in the common hall of the said towne, according to the grant of the king's majestye letters patent of king Edward VIth. of most famous memorye, the 25th day of Febry, Ao. nono. Eliz. for the intent only in this book declared, &c. And also by consent to dyne together at Goodman Storye house.

Parties in Suit.	To whose judgment referred.	Award.	Final determination.
Imprimis, Bet. Simon Weston Smythe, Pltf. and Thomas Andrew Taylor, Deft.	Mr. Vicar, Robert Scotred, Robert Best, Edward Storeye.	Pltf. and Deft. to give both their hands to stand to the award.	Weighing the matter according to equity, justice, and good conscience, said parties shall be lovers and friends hereafter; and as either has offended the other by words, they shall forgive freely the same from the bottom of their hearts; and said Thomas Andrew shall pay in hand in recompense of his charge, which he hath spent in lawe, 3*s*. 4*d*.

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Meetings of this nature continued in the town for twelve years, during which period we may presume the ten men were held in no little degree of respect, by the deference at all times paid to the judgment of the referees, which in no instance appears to have been disputed. On occasions when there were no differences to adjust, the entry was 'Oia bene et quiet laudes Deo.' All matters well and in quietness, thanks be to God.

A.D. 1569. In this year an order was made, that if any person who had agreed to assemble every month should be absent, and not pay four-pence for his dinner, the bailiff of the town lands should pay it, who should have it again allowed, and the defaulter to be crossed out of the book, and never after received into the company, although he desire to be received afterward again.

1576. About the year 1576, the ten men and inhabitants began to extend their duties, by placing out poor children apprentices, and even made orders for raising certain acre shots and payments of country taxes. They also advanced small sums of money under twenty shillings, by way of loan, to poor persons. Various sums are mentioned to be paid for curing 'skaulde heads' of boys, and for keeping orphan children. And all orders now made are stated to be by the consent of the ten men, 'with the advice of Mr. Vycar and others of the copanye.'

1578. About two years after, it was agreed that Mr. Colvyle should be moved to come to Wisbeche, as well for the discharge of the suite of the high fen,* as for dyking

* See page 156.

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the river. And a bill was agreed to be made of an acre shot of two-pence the acre, for the lands in Elm, for the dykereeves to collect, for the fynishing up of the goole into Marshland.

Certain orders were likewise agreed upon by the tenne men, with consent of the justices of the peace, respecting the s'vyce of the queen's majesty with lambes and calves, under the statute of purveyance. Purveyances being afterwards found to be attended with grievances to the subject, the same were taken away by statute 12th Charles II. c. 24. But whilst that statute existed, every person within the towne paid towards the queen's provision for calves, lambs, &c. in manner following:

For every kowe, 1 ob.	Every 20 wethers, 1 penny.
Every 20 ewes, 2 pence.	Every swine, 1 ob. being above a quarter old.

In lapse of time, relaxation took place in punctual attendance, so that it became again necessary to enforce the order of 1569, by a stronger measure; and it was agreed that every Tuesday monthly, until 1st Novr. then next, the tenne men for the year elected should meet at the town hall, and if any were absent, he should pay four-pence, and should continue during such tyme as any business occurred for the towne, or appeasing of controversies amongst neighbours, and be in conference *all the day*, upon payne of departing, every person of the tenne, without licence of the rest, four-pence for every default. And if he came an hour after eight in the morning,* if any of the tenne, to pay two-pence A.D. 1583.

* If the reader is curious to know the hours of meals in queen Elisabeth's time, he may learn them in King's Archæologia, vol. 6. "With us, the

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towards charge of the house and expenses. In this same year it is stated that the company and laborers began to work upon the great bridge, and three of the ten men were appointed to go to St. Ives to view that bridge. A matter also is brought before the corporation respecting "the rode of fre land nye the windmill * in East "Field," but no adjudication is made. About this time the corporate body, in addition to their other obligations, began to take upon themselves the duty of acting as trustees in cases of donations and bequests of charitably disposed persons, whose benefactions are here enumerated, and directions given for their disposal as under:

	£.	s.	d.
Acct of money bestowed on the poore, Tot.	48	18	9
Out of town stock	11	17	0
	£60	15	9

A.D. 1585. The capital burgesses also took under their direction the churchwardens' accounts, collections for the poor, &c. though subject to the justices' revision and final allowance.

"nobility, gentry, and students do ordinarily go to dinner at eleven before "noon, and to supper at five or bet. five and six at afternoon. The merchants "dine and sup seldom bef. twelve at noon, and six at night, especially in "London. Husbandmen dine also at high noon, as they call it, and sup at seven "or eight; but out of the term in our universities, the scholars dine at ten." Froissart mentions waiting on the duke of Lancaster at five o'clock in the afternoon, when he had supped. "And when Joseph saw Benjamin with "them, he said, bring these men home, for they shall dine with me at "noon." Gen. xliii. 16. The Anglo Saxon meal was made just before sunset; hot meats were provided.

* Windmills were introduced into France and England about 1040.

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Guyhirne, a hamlet of Wisbech, about six miles from the town, at this period began to be visited with sickness, supposed to be the plague, and an assessment was ordered to be made for six weeks, to be paid to the poore of Guyhirne, and the sum of £4. 15*s.* 5*d.* was accordingly raised and expended.

The public attention was called to the general cleansing of the streets and channels of the town in this year, probably with a view to the prevention of disease.

The suspicion of the nature of the sickness at Guyhirn seems to have been too well founded, and no time was lost in adopting cautionary measures to prevent its extension, and to guard against the admission of all persons and goods into the town without due vigilance. A meeting also took place of the ten men of the body corporate in common hall assembled on 28th April, in especial relation to this woeful calamity, when it was thought proper to divide the town into ten wards, placing one of the ten men as superintendant over each ward. The wards, as then set out, were as follow:

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A. D. 1585.

List of Wards.

Situation.	Name.	By whom conducted.
From the beginning of the town into the first style of the church against Timber Market, and the alms houses to the said style	Timbre Ward, 10*s.*	William Wilkes.
All the alms houses and others on both sides of the church yard, and along the castle dyke to the great gate	Church Ward, 10*s.*	Thomas Edwards.
All the rowe against the castle gate, all Deadman's Lane, with all the houses to Swillinghurne *	Castle Ward, 5*s.*	Robert Best.
All the houses in the brynke watch, on the south side of the river of Wisbech	South Ward, 5*s*,	Robert Cowper.
All the houses in the brynke watch, on the north side of the river of Wisbech, in the brynke watch	Berton Ward, 5*s.*	Robert Scotred.
All from Berton Lane to the pond † in the Old Market..	Whyte Cross Ward, 5*s.*	Edwd. Whyte, gent.
All the Old Market to the bridge on the other side of the pond	Old Market Ward, 8*s.*	William Sturmyn.
All from the brydge next the great river, all Shippe Lane to the town hall	Shippe Lane Ward, 6*s.*	William Day.
The rest of Shippe Lane and the houses in all the rowe against the cross	New Market Ward, 3*s.*	John Byrd.
From the corner of Richard Best's house to the mill hill, ‡ with all the large market booths,—and thus the wards be ended	Mill Ward, 4*s.*	John Wilkinson.

* Swillinghurne is a field beyond Oldfield, and leading to New Common Bridge. † This pond was filled up in the year 1669.
‡ Where Mr. Girdlestone's house now stands, in the street now called Ship Street or Hill Street.

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These wards may be thus reconciled with the state of the town in 1826.

Timbre Ward. It extended from the beginning of the town, at or near New Common bridge, to the south end of the church yard, and certain almshouses, * the site of which cannot now be exactly ascertained: this ward seems to have embraced the whole space from New Common bridge to the end of Timber Market† on the east side.

Church Ward. The almshouses here mentioned appear to be those on the north side of the church, as well as those which formerly stood on the south side (now pulled down). The castle dyke (forty feet wide) was intended to protect the castle next the town: this ward, therefore, comprised the south-west side of the Market Place to the castle gate.

* Hawkins' almshouses were not built until 1633.

† Timber Market is a portion of the town lying at the east end of the church, formerly embracing the whole space from the boys' charity school to the Downham road; and when the waters of the Ouse emptied themselves into the north sea beyond Wisbech, this spot constituted the bank of the Ouse, and was anciently allotted for the depositing of timber until sale was made thereof, from whence it obtained the name of the Timber Market, by which it is still most generally known, and as long as it continues so to be, carries with it in some degree the records of the ancient boundary of the river, over which there was a ferry, which circumstance is preserved in the name of the public house there situate, called the Ferry House.

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Castle Ward. The castle gate in the west front was contiguous to a drawbridge* over the moat in that quarter, and stood about the end of the present York Row, near Mr. Cleeve's: this ward, therefore, comprised all the dwellings on the north side of Deadman's Lane round by the vicarage, taking in the west side of Timber Market to Swillinghurn Field, which lies beyond Tillery Field, leading to New Common bridge.

South Ward. This is sufficiently expressive of all the houses on the south brink.

Berton Ward. The like on the north brink.

White Cross Ward. There is an open space on the north brink called the Low, where formerly a cross stood, called White Cross: this ward, therefore, comprised the extent along Pickard's Lane to an ancient pond in the Old Market, with all the western and northern sides thereof.

Old Market Ward. All the east side of the Old Market as far as the bridge.

Shippe Lane Ward. This extended from the bridge along the wharfe or quay by the river, turning

* See page 124, and also note, page 130.

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round at the end of the street opposite to the Bell corner, and terminating at the old grammar school and town hall in Ship Lane.

New Market Ward. The rest of Ship Lane, the new Market Place, and the houses on the north side of High Street in a line with the Rose inn, turning round the corner, past the new town hall to the bridge.

Mill Ward. Richard Best's house, as well as the large market booths, are unknown; but this ward seems to have comprised the ground from about the opening near the Wheat Sheaf inn, past the boys' school and Church Lane, to the mill hill where Mr. Girdlestone's house now stands, at the east end of Ship or Hill Street.

These precautions, salutary and laudable as they were, did not prevent the calamity in the neighbourhood from reaching the town, and the effects of the disease soon proved it to be the plague. A.D. 1586.

One of the most terrific qualities of the plague is its mystery; the commencement, progress, and termination of it are all marked by uncertainty. The last and direst visitation, with which this country was afflicted, was that of the metropolis, whence it spread far and wide, in 1665 and 1666. It is impossible to read De Foe's Narrative,

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without feelings of horror and alarm. According to the lowest computation, 68,596 persons are said to have been carried off by this sore visitation.

This contagion is supposed to have been imported into the western parts of Europe at the time of the Crusades, and after that period our own country had for many centuries her full share of its terrible inflictions. Many imagine that the plague has often been in London since 1666, but that from the improved cleanliness of our metropolis, it has never assumed a more formidable appearance than that of contagious fever. Erasmus ascribed the frequent plagues of England to slovenly habits. At this day, however, we have established a claim to the virtue of cleanliness, which, although formerly it might be held in little estimation, is, by the progress of civilization, become an honourable feature in our national character. The last instance of contagion of plague in any quarter subject to our government occurred at Malta, in 1813, when an interesting volume on the subject was published by Mr. Tully, surgeon of the king's forces.

In the time of the visitation, which, in the year 1586–7, unhappily extended to Wisbech, the corporate body, who had already divided the town into ten wards, used the utmost vigilance to restrain the direful disorder. A list of these wards was directed to be published, and the names of all strangers resorting within any of those districts were particularly noted, and the following proceedings and orders took place thereupon.

The names of all non-residents who came into the town, and especially of such as entered surreptitiously, were

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immediately reported to the ten men; and they, under the direction of the magistrates, appointed governors, who held regular meetings, and made peremptory orders for the conduct of all persons suspected of sickness, whether they should be allowed to go abroad, or be confined to their houses. They likewise appointed a place where persons supposed to be infected should be kept, confining them to that peculiar district, and debarring them from communication with any other part of the town.* This place was called Berton.

In September 1587, further orders were issued by the governors, that one Edward Wright, who had abused the towne in casting filthy clothes into the little river, to the annoyance of the inhabitants, and evyl example of all others, should be sent to the house of correction until released by four of the governors. A.D. 1587.

Money was delivered to the town baley to be distributed to the poor and infected in each of the wards. It being known that one Godfrey Smith, contrary to the justices' orders, and to the damage of his neighbours, had gone to Berton into a house amongst the infected, and since had gone abroad, being warned by the governors, and had refused to obey good orders; he was to be imprisoned in the house of correction, and so in like manner was one Robert Smythe, for accompanying the said Godfrey, and abusing the deputy of the ward in vyle words.

* People have been known to remain in safety in an infected town by shutting themselves up from all communication with such as might be suspected of giving the disease; and it is said that whilst the plague was in the town of Cambridge, the colleges remained entirely free by using this precaution; and in the plague at Rome in 1657, the monasteries and nunneries defended themselves by the same means. *Dr. Mead's Discourses on the Plague.*

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9th Oct. At a meeting of the ten men, orders were made for the sicke to be sent to Berton, when a carte and horse were ordered to be bought to carry all necessaries there to them.

21st Nov. The governors continued their duties, ordering all whom they thought necessary to be forthwith placed at Berton,* and to have weekly allowance accordingly, issuing orders for denying any allowance to such as offended, and directing who were to be kept close.

25th Nov. The governors now gave orders who should be permitted to go abroad, limiting the distance, and when permission was granted, it was with strict injunction that they should not have any recourse into any man's house upon pain of a fine.

26th Nov. The disease beginning to abate, the governor removed nine persons from Berton, and allowed them twelve pence a piece, so as they performed orders. One person was ordered to be set in the stocks, and another to be tyed to one of the posts of the market cross, and to have twenty stripes, for disobedience of orders.

3d Dec. At a meeting of the governors, it was agreed that nine persons, who had been allowed twelve pence a piece on the 26th Nov. should the week following have liberty to go abroad, and that all the rest of the sicke at Berton, being eleven persons, should have liberty to return to their houses and abide therein, strictly obeying orders. Independent of donations, a special assessment was made by the justices for the sicke and poor, and orders issued respecting payment thereof.

* This "Berton" was about the entrance of the new road from Thorney, which was and is called Barton Lane.

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In the mean time the ten men had very frequent assemblies, cooperating with the governors in issuing from time to time the necessary directions.

To prevent, as far as might be, all communication be- 10 Dec.
tween the sick and the healthy, it was directed that every governor should bring in a bill in writing of the name of each person, being an householder, who should be able to give any bounty within his ward, and of every person having need, so that persons willing to distribute to such as were in want might be certified, and the poor be relieved, without begging from door to door as theretofore at christmas.

A further order was published, that the poor people should be forbidden to go abroad at christmas, and not be relieved at any man's door; but such as be minded to give, either to send it to them, or to give it themselves at their houses, or to deliver it to the governor of the ward, &c.

A man having presumed to go abroad without leave was ordered to be carried before the justices.

Robert Scotred, one of the governors, falling sick, 28 Dec.
another was appointed to fill his place as governor.

The men and women lately visited were directed to be placed on convenient seats by themselves in the church.

A further order was made respecting the town's horse and cart at Berton, and certain locks, table, bedding, &c.

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5th Jan. The governors still continued their meetings, and the house of one James Goodericke being suspected to be infected, and partly known to be so, therefore the said James Goodericke was ordered to kepe his house and shoppe from henceforth shut close up, and not suffer any person other than of his own house to come to him; and that the governor of the ward should oversee that he do not contrary to the justices' order, and that if he refuse, he be committed to the house of correction.

A.D. 1587. In April, five pounds were lent to the above James Goodericke; and one Hervye and his wife were ordered to take all the stuffe out of their house, and lay it on the further side of the little river, and make a fire in the house: and thus the orders relating to the plague conclude. It is not recorded how this direful disease was supposed to be brought into the town, only that the symptoms of it were first discovered at Guyhirn, nor is the extent of the calamity here stated. On consulting the register of the parish, it appears that forty-two were buried in the month of September preceding, and sixty-two in the month of October, after which the numbers declined to about twenty and eighteen in the four succeeding months, which is not more than three or four beyond the usual average at that season of the year.

On the 11th April, a fire took place in the old market, which broke out about twelve at night, and the town bailey was ordered to pay forty shillings for expenses bestowed at the time.

1588. From this period an alteration took place in the manner of conducting the proceedings by the body corporate. The monthly meetings, so far as they related to the

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settling and appeasing of controversies between the inhabitants and neighbours, seem now to have ceased, and the ten men directed their attention towards other useful purposes, such as the putting out of apprentices; a new duty also began to devolve upon them as trustees for the property of widows and orphans committed to their care, as well as to manage and place out the stock at interest,* for the benefit of both the mothers and children, until the latter arrived at age, giving assurances for the repayment of the monies put forth. The style of their meetings also was changed, which are now declared to be "A meeting of the ten men, to take account of all goods "comytted of trust to them of sundry orphans, according "to the confidence in them reposed, and assurance to be "taken for repayment of such sum as should be put "forthe for affairs of the towne, and placing out poor "children; also for allowing churchwardens' accounts, "menworks, or surveyors of highways accounts, granting "leases, &c."

	£.	s.	d.
The amount of orphan stock is stated at	280	9	0
Towne stock put forthe for profytt	79	15	0

The ten men also made orders respecting the fees for the knolling of the bell at the death of any inhabitant.

The butchers' shambles † were this year erected at the upper end of the new market, the cost whereof is stated to have been £85. 19*s.* 4*d.* The stalls were let, and the rent accounted for before the ten men. Accounts also were produced by the constables for the queen's tax, the

* Interest at this time was eight per cent.

† These were removed from the market place in 1810.

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market watch, brink watch, churchwardens, menworks, new bridge, profit of the great bell, and putting forth children apprentices, and at the conclusion, a memoran-
A.D. dum is made as follows: "Memdum. I bought for the
1592. "towne, in London, the picture of king Edward VI. "K. E." which is at this day hanging up in the town hall.

1595. The wards are again repeated, and a governor appointed to each, who was to oversee and take order for relief of the poor within each ward, and report of their neede to be made every sabbath after evening prayer, and the governors were directed to view their wards once a week, or forfeit four pence.

At this period overseers of the poor were not appointed, nor was any compulsory method adopted for the relief of the poor until the statute 27th Hen. VIII. c. 25. but they seem to have been left to such relief as the humanity of their neighbours would afford them. The monasteries in particular were their principal resource, and among other bad effects which attended the monastic institutions, it was not, perhaps, one of the least, (though frequently esteemed quite otherwise) that they supported and fed a numerous and idle body of poor, whose sustenance depended upon what was daily distributed in alms at the gates of the religious houses. But upon the total dissolution of these, the inconvenience of thus encouraging the poor in habits of indolence and beggary was quickly felt throughout the kingdom, and abundance of statutes were made for providing for the poor and impotent. After many fruitless experiments the statute 43d Elizabeth was passed, by which overseers of the poor were appointed in every parish. Their office and

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duty were principally first, to raise competent sums for the necessary relief of the impotent, old, blind, and others, being poor and not able to work, and secondly, to provide work for such as were able and could not otherwise get employment. The two great objects of this statute seem to have been first, to relieve the poor and impotent, and then only secondly, to find employment for such as were able to work, and that, by providing stocks of raw materials, to be worked up at their separate homes, instead of accumulating all the poor in one common workhouse, a practice which puts the sober and diligent upon a level (in point of their earnings) with those who are idle and dissolute, depresses the laudable emulation of domestic industry and neatness, and destroys all endearing family connexions, the only felicity of the indigent; whereas if none were relieved but those who are incapable of earning a living, and that in proportion to their incapacity, if no children were removed from their parents, but such as are brought up in rags and idleness, and if any poor man and his family, who could not obtain employment, were furnished with it, and allowed the whole profits of their labour, a spirit of busy cheerfulness would soon diffuse itself through every cottage, work would become easy and habitual, when absolutely necessary for daily subsistence, and the poor man would go through his task without a murmur, if assured that he and his children, when incapable of work, through infancy, age, or infirmity, would then, and then only, be entitled to support from his opulent neighbours. Such appears to have been the intention of the statute of queen Elizabeth: probably there might be a defect in confining the management of the poor to small parochial districts, which are incapable of furnishing proper work, or providing an

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able director. Upon this the learned Blackstone * observes, that when the shires, the hundreds, and the tythings were kept in the same admirable order in which they were disposed by the great Alfred, there were no persons idle, consequently none but the impotent that needed relief; and the statute 43d Elizabeth seems entirely founded on the same principle. There is not a more necessary or more certain maxim in the frame and constitution of society, than that every individual must contribute his share, in order to the well being of the community; and surely they must be very deficient in sound policy, who suffer one half of a parish to continue idle, unemployed, and dissolute, and then are amazed to find that the industry of the other half is not able to maintain the whole. To return, however, from this digression, and proceed with the corporate proceedings:—the body corporate having power by their charter to acquire, take, and enjoy other lands, &c., the ten men seem to have become purchasers of a certain real estate, the situation of which is not particularized, but a memorandum is made thereof, which proves that the parties were sufficiently attentive to their personal comforts.

"Item. Paid for the expences of James Saylebank, "John Rogers and his wife, and Robert Adams and his "wife, on 29th and 30th September, at Lynn, in going to "Mr. Justice Gudger, to have the fine acknowledged, "as well of the lands which are purchased of the said "Rogers, as are purchased of Robert Adams, for the use "of the towne.

* Blackstone's Commentaries, page 9.

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	£.	s.	d.
" Item. For the forage of us and our horses		0	4
" Item. For one qute of wyne afore supper, " and our suppers and wyne and sugar..		4	10
" Item. For a qute of wyne, sugar and cakes " in the morning.....		0	11
" Item. For our dinners, and three quartes of " wyne and sugar		5	10
" Item. For our horse meat, and gyven to the " chamberlayne and others		0	18
" Item. Paid Mr. Huett for the dble fyne, " precipe and concord		28	4
" Item. Paid to him towards suing forth the " same.....		36	8
" Item. Paid and given to Rogers' wyffe ..		20	0
" Item. Paid and given to R. Adams' wyffe		10	0
" Item. For our passage at the bridges.....		0	3
	£5	8	8
" More I paid at London towards suing forth " the fines.....		20	0
" Item. More I paid for the fyne when I took " that forthe.....		23	4

The fine above alluded to appears to have been issued out of the court at Westminster, but it was not unusual to acknowledge fines relating to property within the isle of Ely, before the chief justice of the isle, as the undermentioned chirograph will show.

" *Insula Elien.* " St. Hec est finalis concordia fca in cur " dni regis apud Ely decimo die Aprilis " anno regni dni nri Caroli sedi Dei gra Anglie Scoc Franc

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" et Hibine regis fidei defensoris &c. decimo octavo coram " Edro Turner mil justic dni regis fidelibs tunc ibi " presentibs int John Harrison quer Robtum Grimble and " Graciam uxem ejus deforc de uno messuagio cû ptin in " Wisbech infra insulam pd &c :"—the remainder in the usual form. Ely. Indorsed : " Insula Elien in Com " Cantabr," *

. . . . . .

Whilst noticing the law proceedings, we present another entry from an old book, Heames' Black Book, relating to the legal customs of the isle, or rather to ancient usage in the hundred of Wisbech, by which it appears that the fair sex were held in a higher degree of respect and estimation there than in other parts of the kingdom. The paragraph is as follows ;

" Heame's Nig. Lib. consuetudo in Hundredo de " Wisbech ex recuperationibus in termino Sanctæ " Trinitatis 1 H. 14 rot 332.—Tho Reson petit versus " Johannem Hely medietatem messuagii in Wisbech " et declarat quod est consuetudo in Hundredo de " Wisbech ab antiqua usitata cujus pdicta villa est " parcella quod mulieres quæ sunt dotabiles de " tenementis in eodem Hundredo debeant de medietate " dotari." †

* The original of this fine came into the compiler's hands as a trustee of Mrs. Wright's charity, and is still amongst the title deeds of the estate left by that benefactress to the town.

† " Thomas Reson demands against John Hely a moiety of a messuage in " Wisbech, and declares that it is the custom in the hundred of Wisbech, " by ancient usage, of which that town is a parcel, that women who are " dowable of tenements in the said hundred ought to be endowed of " a moiety thereof."—The above curious extract was furnished by a friend, to whom the compiler is much indebted for the interest he takes in this compilation.

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In king Edward's charter it is ordered, that £3. 15*s.* should be distributed amongst the poor annually, according to the discretion of the ten men, which sum is for the first time here noticed amongst the benefactions made by the capital burgesses as follows: A.D. 1596.

"Item. They distributed the £3. 15*s.* which was the "king's gyfte."

The account of bonds for monies advanced on loan had now increased in value to £453. 6*s.* 4*d.* which afterwards accumulated in amount to £940. 18*s.* 6*d.* all which sums were advaneed for the benefit of the inhabitants of the towne, to be repaid with interest.

The style of election is again changed, being here called "A meeting of the inhabitants of the bodye "corporate of the towne, by virtue of the letters patent "of king Edward VI., which did assemble themselves "in common hall, by the greater number of which inhabi- "tants, were of new chosen, ten men of the better and "more discreet of the inhabitants, cherishing families in "the said town, to the intent, that same ten should have "power for one year to demise for the inhabitants, the "lands, &c. belonging to the said body corporate." 1598.

The names of the ten are then enumerated, the first named of whom is William Sturmyn, esq. whose widow left certain almshouses.

We have before remarked on certain differences relative to Wisbech high fen, but from the brevity of the proceedings, little of their nature can be discovered, and 1599.

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again in this year disputes arose between the town of Whittlesea and Wisbech hundred, respecting the high fen, * whereupon a commission was sued forth in chancery, and the suit ordered to be conducted by the body corporate, but the issue thereof is not noticed among the proceedings.

From this period the elections of the capital burgesses became more regular, or at least are recorded with more accuracy, although no extraordinary event occurred for the next ten or eleven years; but the ten men, after their election, took upon themselves the direction of the general affairs of the town.

A.D. 1610. The corporation at this time became purchasers of certain lands in Walpole, but doubts having arisen as to their power to make purchases, Edward Buckworth, esq. and two other of the burgesses were directed to go up to London with their charter, there to take advice concerning the confirmation thereof, and altering the course of the election, by confirming the same to the *freeholders* inhabiting within the town, or the greater number of them. The inhabitants also were sued for service to the king, relative to the lands at Walpole purchased by them, but they were released by pleading the charter. About the same time they applied to his majesty king James I. † for the renewal of their charter, with further powers for purchasing lands, and restricting the election of burgesses to freeholders only of forty shillings per annum and upwards.

* Wisbech high fen and Whittlesea parish adjoin each other in the wash.

† An abstract of this appears in that of king Charles II.

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The king was pleased, in the 9th year of his reign, by his letters patent, to grant their petition, and to declare the inhabitants of the town to be a body corporate, by the name of "The burgesses of the town of Wisbech, "within the isle of Ely, in the county of Cambridge," and that they should have perpetual succession, and power to hold estates for terms of years or otherwise, as well as to grant, sell, or exchange estates, and adding a confirmation of the estates before by them enjoyed.* After this grant, the burgesses, when elected, assumed the name of "capital," which continues to be their honorary distinction. An attempt was subsequently made in 1668 to obtain a renewal of the charter, with a power of appointment of the capital burgesses for life; but the town bailiff was directed to oppose such proceedings, and to renew it with the same privileges as the freeholders had before enjoyed. Accordingly a renewal was obtained, although a caveat was entered against it, and on the petition of the ten burgesses, his majesty Charles II. in the 21st year of his reign, confirmed and enlarged the former privileges of the town by a new charter. A.D. 1611.

By these letters patent, the inhabitants are to every intent a body corporate, of which the town bailiff, one of the body, is the president, annually elected from among themselves, for the better management of the affairs of the town, although not recognized by the charter. The signatures of the capital burgesses are now, for the first time, (1666) subscribed to the proceedings.

* The provisions of this charter are so similar to those contained in that of the 21st year of the reign of Charles II., that it was not thought necessary to give a copy of it here.

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Defence of the Isle of Ely, &c.

A.D. 1643. The sword of civil war, when once unsheathed, is not easily returned into the scabbard. In the disastrous times of the unhappy Charles, the isle of Ely, having been gained to the interests of the parliament by the activity of Oliver Cromwell,* he was soon afterwards appointed governor there,† when he caused fortifications to be raised near the Horseshoe, about a mile from Wisbech, to secure the pass out of Lincolnshire, which to that time remained in the king's interest, and soldiers were stationed there under the orders of colonel Sir John Palgrave and captain William Dodson. The capital burgesses

* Oliver Cromwell was born at Huntingdon, and resided for some time at St. Ives, and afterwards at Ely; he had been very active in the drainage of the isle, which made his interest very considerable in these parts.

† The following anecdote (the truth of which there is no reason to doubt) shews that although Oliver Cromwell might not take up his quarters at the town of Wisbech, he appeared in the neighbourhood with his forces. At Needham Hall, the residence of Mr. William Dow, at Elm, three miles distant from Wisbech, is preserved an ancient table of oak, (entirely of one solid piece) which is rendered remarkable by the circumstance of Oliver Cromwell having reposed on it one night; and there is now living in the parish of Elm a person far advanced in years, who well remembers his grandfather saying "That when he was a boy, he saw Oliver Cromwell and "his troops pass by the avenue leading to this hall, and that the person "then inhabiting the mansion offered to Cromwell his best bed, "which he declined, observing, that perhaps the next day he should "have to sleep in the open field, therefore, in preference, he chose to "pass the night on this very table. Such of his officers as could be accom-"modated were supplied with beds, and the rest of his troops took shelter "in the outbuildings and premises." The term the old man used was, that this occurred during the time Cromwell "*was ransacking the fens,*" and that he made a building called the Nine Chimney House, at Emneth, the adjoining village to Elm, his head quarters, which spot is now in the occupation of Mr. John Graham Dow, whose house stands near the site of the old building.

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advanced captain Dodson £150. for the service of the *king and parliament*, (as it is expressed in their proceedings) the command of the troops being entrusted to this officer, who had been sent down for the siege of Crowland, then a royal garrison.

The town of Wisbech appears to have been divided in its political sentiments, at least some degree of licentiousness took place, for a mutiny is said to have broken out, and eight hundred soldiers were sent down to quell the same, under the command of colonel Saxers, and 35*s.* 6*d.* was paid by the capital burgesses towards the quartering of such soldiers.

The parliamentary forces came to Peterborough in order to the besieging of Crowland, Cromwell himself at this time lying at Peterborough with a regiment of horse, to carry on the siege. The town of Crowland having been taken on 9th of May following, Cromwell and his forces marched on to Stamford. After this, £250. were ordered by parliament to be advanced for the defence of the isle, and furnished to major Ireton, to be paid out of the receipts of the excise, as " per ordinance of parliament," and a troop of horse was accordingly raised. Also £11. 12*s.* 6*d.* was ordered to be paid to Sir John Palgrave, for iron work employed for the drawbridge, at the time when Wisbech was garrisoned for the parliament.

A commission was voted by parliament to raise ten regiments of horse, and ten of foot, and the earl of Manchester, * as commander of the seven associated A.D. 1644.

* The earl of Manchester (as commander in chief of the seven associated counties) was ordered to set out for the relief of the north. His first exploit was the taking of Lynn, on 16th September 1643, and he next bent his course for Lincolnshire.

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counties undermentioned, was authorised to raise in them ten thousand men, and a rate was made by an ordinance of both houses of parliament, to provide a weekly sum by each county and district, according to the following proportions :

	£.	s.	d.
Essex, weekly sum of	1687	10	0
Suffolk	1875	0	0
Norfolk and city of Norwich	1875	0	0
Hertfordshire	675	0	0
Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely	783	15	0
Huntingdonshire	350	0	0
Lincolnshire	1288	15	0

At this critical period, the earl of Manchester was invested with extraordinary power, and great preparations were made on both sides, as the parties anticipated that the ensuing summer would decide the pretensions of either.

On the 2d July, the disastrous engagement of Marston Moor, so unfortunate to the royal cause, took place. The armies consisted of about 25,000 men each. Manchester and Cromwell led the right of the parliamentary forces. The battle did not actually commence until seven in the evening, and all was closed by ten at night. Both parties fought with determined bravery, but the forces of the parliament were triumphant. It appears by the journals of the house of commons, that in 1648, £70. per week were ordered for the pay of a troop consisting of sixty horse, for the defence of the isle of Ely, whereof John Hobart, esq. of Outwell, was colonel.

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The town of Wisbech, no doubt, felt the burthen of their proportion of the tax raised among the associated counties, in these harassing and distressful times,* for in the lords' journal will be found a petition signed by John Hobart and William Fisher, to parliament, from the inhabitants and landowners of the hundred of Wisbech, for that having, in all taxes on the eastern association, paid a moiety (in proportion) more than their neighbour counties, and having sent a troop of horse † for the service of the parliament; and also having with others expended £2,000. in last reducing Crowland, they prayed to be reimbursed that sum, and to be exempted from all arrears of taxes, the waters that winter having run over all their ancient defensive banks, and broken the banks of Wisbech, Elm, Upwell and Outwell, drowned 14,000 acres of rich ground, carried away divers houses, and drowned many cattle, besides the loss in corn and hay invaluable. A.D. 1656.

During this period many of the church lands were put up for sale, and it seems that the manor of Wisbech, with others in this neighbourhood, was sold to Thomas Allen,

* In these arduous times, one John Fisher, of Wisbech, was fined for delinquency. His offence was, that he was in arms against the parliament. He rendered before December 1645, his estate in reversion, which was about £80. per annum, for which his fine at a tenth is £80. *Journals of the House of Commons.*

Also there was an ordinance for granting pardons to Thomas Wragg, yeoman, and Edward Buckworth, both of Wisbech, for their delinquencies. *Ibid.*

† A troop of horse continued to be kept up even after the revolution of 1688, as on 6th June 1690, four pounds were ordered to be paid towards the expense of a horse to serve "in the troop," and the town bailiff was directed to defray a moiety of the charge for arms and furniture. *Hutcheson's MSS.*

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Francis Rowland, and others, for £2544. 1*s.* 6½*d*; and a parcel of Wisbech manor demesne was also sold to Jonathan Barnes and Richard Harrison, for £1915. 16*s.* 8*d.*

A.D. 1658. We read of no further proceeding relating to the isle during the commonwealth; but when Cromwell obtained the Protectorate, it is well known that the castle of Wisbech was sold to his secretary, Thurloe, who made it his residence.

Eighteen months of anarchy, after Cromwells' death, made the nation impatient of its oppressors, and indignant of its sufferings. The national wish was felt and obeyed at a time when scarcely any one dare utter it, and Charles II. was invited from exile to his paternal 1660. throne, by a people who desired nothing more than the restoration of those institutions under which England had been prosperous and happy. On his restoration, a tide of extravagant joy overspread the nation, and the town of Wisbech partook with their neighbours in the general rejoicing, a sum of money being granted by the capital burgesses to entertain the inhabitants.

Secretary Thurloe, who, as it is above stated, had become the purchaser of the castle of Wisbech, was a great benefactor to the town, and the inhabitants, sensible of his kindness, wished to express their gratitude by electing him their burgess in parliament.

Brady, in his "History of Burghs," observes, that it was left to the sheriff of each county to name and direct which were burghs, and which were not, by those indefinite and general words in the writ: "De qualibet

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" civitate duos cives & de quolibet burgo duos burgenses, " &c. eligi facias, &c." i. e. " to cause to be chosen two " citizens of any whatever city, and two burgesses of any " whatever burgh, &c." The first returns extant of knights, citizens, and burgesses being summoned to parliament, are in 26th Edward I. (1298) before which time citizens or burgesses are not found to be summoned. In the 28th of the same king, the sheriff of Lancashire, after the return of the knights, gives the reason why no return was made by him of citizens and burgesses, in these words: " That there were not any citizens or burgesses " within that county, from which any citizens or burgesses " ought or were wont to come to the said parliament, for " or by reason of their inability or poverty." By this and other instances he proves, that from 23d Edward I. and also during the reigns of Edward II. and III. Richard II. Henry IV. V. and VI. and Edward IV. it was left to the discretion and judgment of the sheriffs, which of the burghs were fit and able to send burgesses, and which were not. And that if ancient able burghs became poor and indigent, and unable to pay the expenses of their burgesses, or had none fit to choose, it was considered a just ground for the sheriff to excuse them from the trouble and charge of electing and sending any. Dr. Brady finishes with this observation: " that the " burgesses, during the time of all these kings' reigns, " never complained of the sheriffs for not returning their " burgh, or not sending precepts to them, or of taking " away their birthrights; nor did the king, lords, or " commons ever blame, complain of, or question the " sheriffs for sending or not sending precepts to this or " that burgh; nor was it accounted an advantage, " honor, or privilege to be bound to send burgesses

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"to parliament, but rather on the contrary, it was "represented a burthen and a grievance for poor and "small burghs to send them.

"Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, never sent burgesses "to parliament before 22d James, (1623) and how it "came to send, I know not. Cirencester was anciently "no burgh, and amongst all the returns in the tower, "from 26th Edward I. to 17th Edward IV. (1478) "there is not one for that town." * Wisbech is said to have been a parliamentary burgh, and that so early as the reign of Edward I. (1300); but when it ceased to be so, does not appear. By the above extract from Brady, it is shown that men were little solicitous to obtain a place in the legislative assemblies, when even their attendance was regarded as a burden and grievance, and not compensated by any return, honor, or profit, proportionate to the trouble or expense. It is very doubtful whether Wisbech was ever possessed of such a parliamentary privilege, however, the town claimed the right under the protectorate in 1658; and at a meeting of the capital burgesses, it was agreed by them "that a burgess "should be chosen," when secretary Thurloe was elected to serve as a representative of this town and borough, (as it is then called for the only time in the journals) in Richard Cromwell's parliament. But Thurloe making his election to serve for the university of Cambridge, (for which also he was returned) and the parliament being dissolved in April following, the town never had the

* Camden and Sir Henry Spelham declare they find no signs of commons in parliament, until 49th Henry III. (1265) and the issue of the earliest writ, 22d Edward I. (1294.)

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honor of an exclusive independent representation.* Amongst the corporation proceedings, is an entry of certain expenses paid to the undersheriff for the county of Cambridge, to the amount of forty shillings, for his pains in electing such burgess, but the privilege, being withdrawn at the restoration, was never afterwards restored.

* Anno 1658-9, Mr. Secretary Thurloe being chosen to serve as a member of this present parliament for the university of Cambridge, the town and borough of Wisbech, in the same county, and for the borough of Huntingdon, it is declared, that he made choice to serve for the university of Cambridge, and waived the election for the boroughs of Wisbech and Huntingdon. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. vii. p. 606.

Thurloe's state papers, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, mention that he was chosen member for the university of Cambridge by one hundred and twenty suffrages, a greater number than ever was known upon the like occasion. vol. v. p. 475.

In these state papers, one of the first letters is the following from Oliver Cromwell to Mrs. St. John.

" Dear Cozen,

" I thankfully acknowledge your love in your kind " remembrance of mee upon this opportunitye. Alas, you do too highlye " prize my lines and my companie. I may be ashamed, to use your own " expressions, consideringe how unprofitable I am, and the mean improve- " ment of my tallent. Yett, to honour my God, by declaringe what he hath " done for my soule, in this I am confident, and I will be soe. Trulye then, " this I finde, that he giveth springes in a drye and barren wilderness, " where noe water is. I live (you know where) in Meshech, which they " say signifies " prolonginge ;" in Kedar, which signifieth " blackness," yet " the Lord forsaketh me not. Though hee doe prolonge, yet he will, I " trust, bring mee to his tabernacle,—to his restinge place. My soul is " with the congregation of the first born, my body rests in hope, and if here " I may honour my God, either by doeing or sufferinge, I shall be most " glad. Truly no poore creature hath more cause to putt forth himself " in the cause of his God than I. I have had plentifull wadges before hand, " and I am sure I shal never earne the leaste mite. The Lord accept me " in his sonne, and give me to walke in the light, and give us to walk in the " light, as hee is in the light. Hee it is that inlighteneth our blackness,— " our darknesse. I dare not say hee hydeth his face from mee ; he giveth " mee to see light in his light, one beame in a darke place hath exceed- " inge much refreshment in it ; blessed be his name for shininge upon so

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Ever since the grant of the charter of Charles II. the same custom has prevailed on the part of the inhabitants, with respect to the manner of electing the capital burgesses, as is observed at the present period, and as the mode is rather singular and unusual, and indeed has been by some called whimsical, it may not be unentertaining to give an account of

THE ANNUAL ELECTION OF CAPITAL BURGESSES.

It has been shewn that letters patent were first granted by king Edward VI. to the inhabitants of the town: that on every 1st of November they should meet in common hall, and there elect ten men, who are to have the administration of the guild estates, and manage the same for the common benefit of the inhabitants for one

" darke a hart as mine. You knowe what my manner of life hath bene. " O, I lived in, and loved darknesse, and hated the light, I was a chiefe, the " chiefe of sinners. This is true. I hated godlinesse, yett God had mercy " on mee. O the riches of his mercy, praise him for mee, pray for mee, " that he, whoe hath begunne a good worke, would perfect it to the day of " Christ. Salute all my good friends in that family whereof you are yett a " member. I am much bound unto them for their love. I bless the Lord " for them, and that my sonne by their procurement is so well. Lett him " have your prayers, your councell; let me have them. Salute your " husband and sister from mee; he is not a man of his word,—he promised " to write about Mr. Wrath, of Epinge, but as yett I received noe letters: " putt him in minde to doe what with convenience may be done for the " poore cozen I did solicit him about. Once more, farewell; the Lord bee " with you, so prayeth your truly loving cozen,

" OLIVER CROMWELL.

" Ely, 13th October, 1630.

" My wive's service and love presented to all her friends.

" To my beloved cozen, Mrs. St. John,
" at Sir William Masham, in his
" house called Oates, present these."

See Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. fast. c. 88, 89, and Warwick's Memoirs, p. 249-50, by which this letter may be fully understood.

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year, and out of the issues, "to repair, maintain, and make "new all such and such like sea shores, banks, and "sewers, as the wardens and brethren of the late frater-"nity or guilde were wont to do:" and that this charter was renewed by king James I. with further powers, and at length confirmed and established by his majesty king Charles II. in the 21st year of his reign, being the last charter of incorporation; by which confirmation of their charter, the inhabitants of the town are declared to be one body corporate and politic, by the name of the "Burgesses of the town of Wisbech, within the isle of "Ely, in the county of Cambridge," and are by the same name to have perpetual succession, with the grant of a common seal, and power to elect ten men *of the better, more honest, and more discreet* burgesses maintaining households, who should be called "capital burgesses" of the said town; and the right of election is vested in the freeholders of the town of the clear annual value of forty shillings, maintaining households there; and the duration of the authority of the ten elected is for one year, during which time they are to have the administration of the estates, and repair and overlook the same, for the common benefit of the burgesses. By this same charter it is also provided, that if the freeholders do not meet on 2d November, or do not elect ten capital burgesses, then the ten of the year preceding shall assemble on 3d November, and then elect ten, to be capital burgesses. A power is also given to the ten men, to call together and summon any other respectable burgesses, maintaining households, to consult about the matters and affairs touching the public good. So that, at present, the householders at large, possessed of freeholds of the requisite value, (who are, properly speaking, the corporation) elect annually from among themselves ten

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men, called the "capital burgesses," who again elect one of themselves to be "town bailiff" for the year. This person becomes the executive officer, though not recognized by the charter, and has the care and administration of the estates for the benefit and advantage of the town. The revenues consist of the rents of these estates, which, with the profits of the fairs and markets, and certain other funds, amount altogether in annual value to upwards of £2,000. and it may be said, to the credit of the corporation, that the trust has been discharged with singular fidelity.*

The capital burgesses (as before observed) have no authority in the administration of justice, nor any right in the exercise of civil power, their duty consisting in the management alone of the estates of the burgesses, which have been granted and left for public and charitable purposes, and the direction of all such matters and affairs as may arise concerning the common benefit of the town. On the 2d November (the day of election) all such residents as choose, having freeholds of forty shillings per annum within the town, and maintaining

* The compiler has pleasure in adding his testimony to what has been before observed, that the gentlemen forming this body derive no peculiar advantage or gratification from it whatsoever. The income is consecrated to public purposes, and to these it is expressly devoted, with a degree of self denial on the part of the corporation to which it would be difficult to find a parellel. The single annual dinner, of which they partake together, in capacity of corporate burgesses, and to which they invite the clergy and the naval and military gentlemen stationed at or resident in the place, forms no exception to this remark. It is paid for by themselves out of their own pockets; and this must be acknowledged a trait of considerable merit and virtue in a corporation in the receipt and control of more than £2,000. per annum. Even the complimentary fee of the town bailiff is generally distributed in charity. *See Jackson's Public Charities*, published in 1822.

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households there, assemble about mid-day at the town hall, together with the ten capital burgesses. At this meeting, the burgesses at large scrutinize the conduct of the ten men of the year preceding, and freely give their opinion in approval or disapproval of any of the public measures. The ten men of the preceding year are then severally put in nomination, together with as many others as the inhabitant freeholders present may think proper, out of whom ten new ones are to be elected for the ensuing year, and thereupon the poll commences. It has been a common practice of late years to read the test act, (13th Charles II.) which declares, that no person shall be chosen to any office that shall not have, within one year next before such election, taken the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the rites of the church of England, and in default thereof, every such election is to be void. After this, a returning officer is appointed, with two check clerks, and a poll paper drawn out. The meeting is then adjourned to the grammar school, where a sort of hustings is erected, to which the freeholders resort to tender and give their votes. The poll is immediately opened, and so continues until twelve o'clock at night, at which hour it is closed. The respectable part of the inhabitant freeholders, who prefer quietness, generally attend at an early hour, and give their votes. Each person is entitled to make one mark against any name on the poll list, as far as the number of ten; but he cannot give more than one mark or vote to one individual, and if he does not choose to exercise his full right of ten votes, he loses the benefit of his remaining votes. As the right of voting was by king Charles' charter confined to freeholders only, it is probable, the number being at that time small, the capital burgesses used, on the day of election, to distribute cakes and wine amongst the electors. Incon-

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venience was soon experienced, and endeavours were made to limit the expense to a certain sum, viz. £6. This at length was considered as encouraging disorder, and it was resolved, that no more cakes and wine should be provided. In time, however, the old custom was revived to a certain extent, but again growing to excess, it was finally abolished in the year 1774, and an order then made, of which two hundred copies were printed, "That no wine, ale, or spirituous liquors should "be in future allowed." This order still remains in force, as relating to the entertaining of the freeholders out of the public purse; it is, however, to be regretted, that the rule is not strictly attended to by some of the candidates for office, who, as is too often the case in elections of greater moment, endeavour to win the favour and support of the smaller freeholders by providing them a treat at some of the public houses. Such of the burgesses as are tempted by this regale do not give their attendance until a late hour, when, it must be acknowledged, the strictest order is not at all times observed. As the evening advances, the noise and humour of the election increase: it may, however, be mentioned, much to the credit of the electors, that they in general exercise due discrimination in the choice of the candidates, so as to comply with the words of the charter, except (which has been witnessed) when the fascinating influence of libations of punch has perverted their better judgment. A clock is fixed on a pedestal over the head of the poll clerk, and at half-past eleven the first proclamation is made; at a quarter before twelve a second, and the instant the clock strikes twelve, the poll clerk closes the books, and the numbers are cast up. While this operation is in progress, all is suspense and expectation. At length the poll clerk mounts the rostrum, and, proclamation being again made for silence,

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pronounces aloud the names of the several candidates, as they were placed upon the poll paper, and the number of votes given to each. This announcement is received in every instance by the meeting, now crowded almost to suffocation, with shouts of applause, or groans of censure, according to the degree of popularity enjoyed by them respectively. After this, the names of the ten highest in order on the poll are repeated and declared by the poll clerk, as the returning officer, to be the ten elected, to act as capital burgesses for the ensuing year. The election being now over, and none but the poll clerk and his two assistants knowing to whom the several freeholders have given their votes, the paper is carefully sealed up under three several seals, to be deposited among the records of the corporation until the next 2d November, and then committed to the flames, without having been opened, unless a scrutiny should be demanded by any unsuccessful candidate, and that step become in consequence unavoidable. The whole assembly then unite in singing "God save the King," and afterwards disperse to their respective homes.

The numbers who attended and voted at the election in 1826 were as follow:

No. 1. 123	No. 5. 97	No. 9. 77
2. 110	6. 92	10. 72
3. 109	7. 83	11. 55
4. 106	8. 83	12. 32

Of whom the ten highest were declared duly elected. We shall not further pursue the transactions of the corporate body in any regular order, but proceed to a description of the public buildings, public charities, and other remarkable events relating to the town, commencing with the Church.

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THE CHURCH.

After a violent struggle of 150 years, the Saxons had succeeded in destroying almost all the remains of Roman civilization in Britain, and wherever their arms prevailed, every vestige of christianity was destroyed; but towards the close of the sixth century, the sun of christianity rose once more. *

A. D. 596. The reign of king Ethelbert was distinguished by the introduction of the christian religion among the Anglo Saxons, through the preaching of Augustine, who was sent by Pope Gregory, with forty associates, to preach the gospel in this island.

The original buildings of our first *rural* churches have no where in this kingdom survived until now. They were generally of wood, and the Normans are said to have brought in the art and custom of building with stone. Time, casualties, or the desolations in the reigns of Stephen and Henry III. destroyed (with a very few exceptions) all the first stone churches, so that none are found more ancient than about the time 1272. of Edward I., or the latter end of his father's reign, and even of these there are but few; for the common edifices of this nature are scarce older than the reign 1422. of Henry VI., into which several much older gravestones have been evidently removed from the former fabrics.†

* The Britons are accused by Bede of having lost, not only the power of religion, but the external form, and of having abolished, except in a few instances, even the order of priesthood, and the distinction of civil society. *Bede*, lib. i. c. 22.

† Nicholls' Literary Anecdotes, vol. 5.

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From a Sketch by J. H. West taken on the Spot. *Melville sculp.*

VIEW OF WISBECH CHURCH.

Published by B. & J. Leach, Wisbech, 1821.

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This particular district, although no stone fit for building is found within it, can boast of many beautiful and stately churches built of that material, more numerous, indeed, than perhaps any other part of England, which is decisive evidence of the wealth as well as of the piety of their founders. The stone employed in the erection of these edifices is universally found to be of an excellent and durable species,* still retaining at the distance, in many instances, of nearly six centuries, its original face and firmness. The sharply pointed arch, which succeeded the circular or Saxon about the year 1200, may be observed in most of them.†

The church of Wisbech is an ancient, spacious fabric, dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and is a singularly constructed building, appearing to have had several additions made to the body of it. Cole,‡ in his MSS. says: "It is the oddest built church I ever met with, "yet, notwithstanding its irregularity, it is a very noble "pile of building, both within and without, and is "furnished with two naves under one single roof, and two "aisles, as well as two chancels, one of which, the south,

* It is supposed to have been generally brought from Barnack pits, near Stamford; the very handsome and elegant tower of Boston is built of the like stone.

† Stavely, in his History of Churches, says, that the Saxons generally built their churches with a descent into them, but the Normans with an ascent. Hence, where we meet with one of the former, we may judge it to be of ancient date.

‡ The Rev. William Cole, vicar of Burnham, in Buckinghamshire, died at Milton, between Ely and Cambridge, 16th December 1782, in his sixty-eighth year. He closed a life spent in learned researches into the history and antiquities of the county of Cambridge in particular. He left to the British Museum (to be locked up for twenty years) his valuable collections, in one hundred volumes in folio, fairly written in his own hand. He was buried under the belfry of St. Clement's church, in Cambridge.

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"is called the town chancel." Under the first window of the latter chancel, on the south side, is a niche, probably the place where the holy water formerly stood. The north chancel is much larger than the other, at the east end of which, and running parellel with it, is the vestry, which probably was formerly one of the chantries.

The naves are lofty, and separated from each other by a row of light and slender pillars, with pointed arches. There are also two aisles, divided from their respective naves, that of the north aisle by low massy pillars, and semi-circular Saxon arches, in the windows whereof was formerly some painted glass, now removed. The exterior of the whole church is leaded. The noble stone steeple tower stands at the west end,* and adjoining to the north aisle on the side of it. This is of more recent date than the church, being erected posterior to A.D. 1500. It appears that in the year 1520, Robert Smith, by his will, gave £20. to the building of the steeple of Wysebeche, directing that sum to be paid within a year after the said steeple was begun to be built.† There is also an order amongst the transactions of the guild, in the year 1524, for the sum of £2. 3*s*. 4*d*. to be advanced by the skyvens to the building of the steeple. We are prevented from judging of any further donations on this occasion, by an unfortunate chasm in the guild proceedings, from 1527 to 1531. The alderman of the guild and his brethren assigned "that £4. should be "paid to the making of the steeple," and a memorandum is added thereto, that "Katherine Wynde had paid £4.

A.D. 1538.

* Churches are not invariably due east and west, because in laying the foundation stone, the architects were guided by the sun, which varies from due east, according to the time when the building is commenced.

† See appendix:—Robert Smith's will.

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"to Mr. Alderman and his brethren, for the use of the "steeple," which may lead us to suppose that it was then about finishing. There is a small lead spire within the pinnacles at the top. The tower is much adorned on every side towards the top with coats of arms. On the tower are initials T. M. the archiepiscopal arms of the see of Canterbury, one with those of Ely, and both impaling the same arms. On the north side of the steeple, quite at top, are these devices:—in the middle are the royal arms of France and England in a large shield, supported by an angel under a canopy; above this, at the two corners, are a text T. and an M. crowned; and at the bottom corner, under the T. the arms of the see of Canterbury; the other under the M. is also mitred, and has a coat of arms quarterly, considered as cardinal Morton's. On the ridge, immediately under the pinnacles, are the following arms, in a shield:—two keys in saltier, being the emblem of St. Peter. On the ridge below the windows are seven shields:—first, France and England; second, uncertain; third, cross keys; fourth, see of Ely supported by an angel; fifth, two swords in saltier, emblem of St. Paul; sixth, uncertain; seventh, Ely, impaling Morton, as supposed, and mitred. Below all these, on the corners of the arch of the belfry door, are two other shields, with first, the keys in saltier; second, the swords in saltier. On the south side at top, are these devices:—first, in the middle, I. H. S.; on one side, three cups; on another, a cup and wafer. On the east front, in the middle, under a canopy, supported by an angel, is the cup and wafer. The arms on the west side of the tower are those of the see of Ely, supported by an angel. Also above them all, on the ridge immediately under the pinnacles, are the arms of the see of Ely.

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It is probable that the see of Ely added to the contributions raised towards the erection of this steeple,* as the three crowns (the arms of the see and isle of Ely) are frequent amongst the various devices on the building. The exterior of the vestry is formed of rich workmanship, and the enigmatical devices are curious and uncommon, amongst which the arms of the see of Ely, with the keys and swords in saltier, are most conspicuous. In the south aisle, at the west end, is a handsome pointed window, which will well bear examination, and is much to be admired; it is divided into five lights, by stone mullions, and the tracery of the whole is finely varied.

The south entrance is approached by a porch: such appendage to a church is very ancient, and though now considered merely as an ornament to it, had formerly its special uses. Mr. Lyson, in his Environs of London, vol. 2. says: "They were *(as our vestries are now)* "places where the inhabitants assembled to transact the "parish business." They also answered other purposes, as is evident from the will of king Edward VI., relative to the foundation of his college at Eton, which directs that there be made "in the south of the body of the "church, a fair large door, with a porch, and the same "for christening of children, and weddings." All these services, since the reformation, are performed in the church. Over the porch is a room, probably used in

* About this period, three bishops of Ely followed in quick succession. Dr. Redman died in 1505, Dr. Stanley was succeeded in 1515, by Dr. West, who lived in great splendour: the poor relieved daily at his gate with meat and drink being two hundred.

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Copy of a letter addressed to Dr.
Sutton, with the annexed sketches

Dear Sir

The annexed devices
were forwarded me by Colnl Watson
in answer to an enquiry, whether
the figures noticed as "curious
& uncommon", at p. 238 of his History
of Wisbech, were Merchants Marks.

I am in receipt of
a communication from Colnl W.
dated the 3d. Inst. in which he states
that "the Rectory is a distinct Building
"(probably used formerly as a Chapel)
"on the South side of the Chancel. It has
"a large Window to the East & one to the
"South. On the East end over the Window,
"on the exterior, in the following order.
"are the figures. No 4. 7. 8. 9. 1. 2 & 5.
"On the South side No 3 & 6. They

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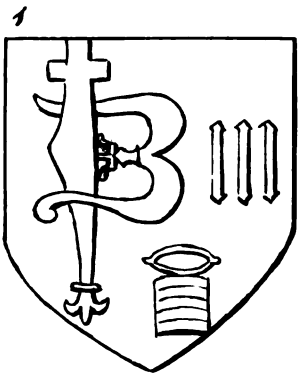
"are interspersed on both sides with
"the three Crowns, the Keys, the crop
"Swords & the Rose"

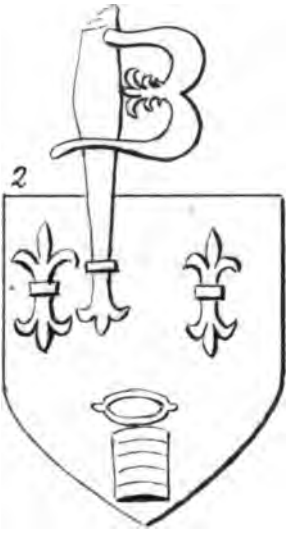
These shields from their
form appear to belong to the age
of Edw.d III. The devices Nos 1. 2. 3 & 9.
are Specimens the rebus of "J. Binwell"
or some such name, who was probably
the founder of this Chapel. The name
of Binwell does not occur in this
work, nor in Dunham's Cly. that
I am aware of. The other devices
with the exception of the Saltire are
certainly "curious & uncommon".

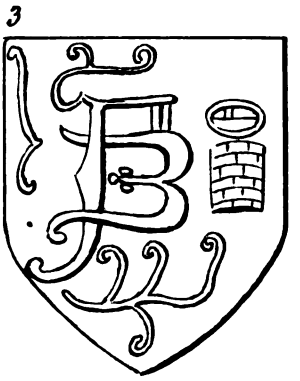
I am Dear Sir
Yours most respy
Sam.l Woodward

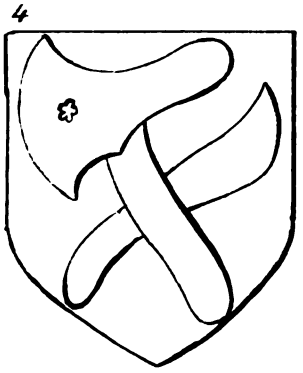
Dean's Square
7 April 1829

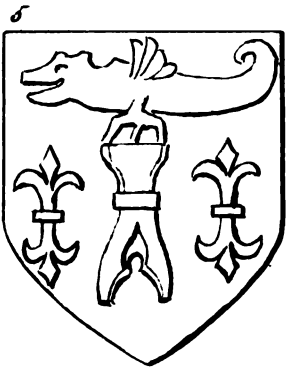
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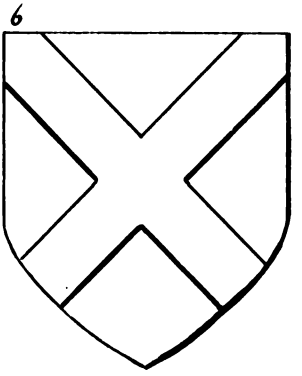


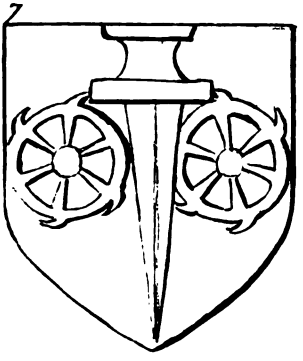


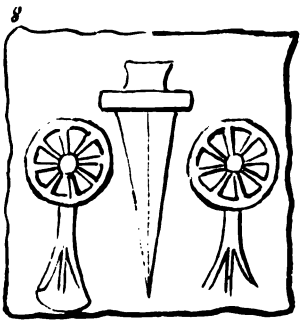


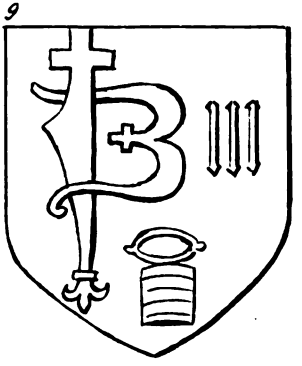












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ancient times as a depository for the church instruments, vessels, books of office, and vestments, and afterwards for the town arms, as bows and arrows, halberts and firelocks, with a certain number of which every parish was formerly obliged to be ready provided.* This room is now converted into a library, which was established about the year 1657. Mr. Henry Pierson gave most of his books of value to this library ;† many others followed the example of his benefactions, and it contains at present several very valuable books, amongst the rest, an excellent folio edition of Walton's Polyglot Bible,‡ Montfaucon's Antiquities, the works of the early fathers, as Irenæus, Clement, &c. with the more recent works of Collier's Church History, Burnet's and Brandth's History of the Reformation, Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, &c. The corporation have the custody thereof, and appoint a librarian, with a small annual fee, which has never been raised from its first establishment.

* Deeds, for safe custody, were often kept in rooms over porches in churches. *Fosbroke*, vol. i. p. 379.

† The Rev. Dr. Algernon Peyton, rector of Doddington, secretary Thurloe, the Capital Burgesses, William Fisher, Henry Pierson, William Edwards, Henry Jerrour, esq. the Rev. William Coldwell, vicar of Wisbech, Lawrance Hewar alias Oxburgh, esq. and many others, are amongst the benefactors.

‡ The first Polyglot work was printed in 1516, by Peter Paul Porrus. It was in Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldaic, and Greek. Walton published his in 1657, by subscription, and this was probably the first book ever printed in that manner in England, and is considered more exact than any other which had been published on that subject. The first English bible we read of was that translated by Wickliffe, about the year 1360, but never printed, though there are MSS. copies of it in several public libraries. Tindall's is the first printed bible, which was printed abroad in 1526. King James' bible is that now read by authority in all the churches in Britain: fifty-four learned persons were appointed for the translation, as appears by the king's letter to the archbishop, dated 1604.

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In the chancel stands the altar, on an eminence of three steps, handsomely railed in, with the paternoster on one side, and the creed on the other, and in the centre, the ten commandments gilt, and about them, several sentences out of the New Testament, over which is a window with some handsome painted glass, presented by Dr. Burrough, a former vicar, and in the south wall, within the rails of the altar, under the monument of Mrs. Jobson, is an arch, now hidden by the wainscot. The width of the church, within the walls, is eighty-three feet by eighty-four, the pavement regular, and in good condition; the church itself is very neatly fitted up with pews throughout,* and the pulpit handsome.

A.D. 1392. In 1392, the then bishop (Fordham) granted an indulgence of forty days pardon to all those who said a paternoster and ave maria for the souls of William Naun, and Maud, his wife, who were buried in Wisbech church yard. During the time of the guild of the holy trinity, that brotherhood exercised some right over or within the church, though the nature thereof does not 1503. appear. In 1503, Richard Wyatt, vicar of Wysbech, paid 6*s.* 8*d.* on his being admitted into the said guild or 1525. fraternity, and in 1525, an order is made by that body, "That the skyvens should kepe sufficiently the tythe "and other things accustomed." And it was directed by the guild, that their first prayers should be at six A.M. the second at eight, and the third as they pleased.

In the church were formerly several chapels, as is customary where the Roman Catholic religion is pro-

* A stove would contribute to render the church still more comfortable to the congregation in the winter season.

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fessed. One was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, another to the Virgin Mary,* and another to Saint Martin, to each of which was appointed a priest. The latter chapel retains its name to the present day, and is that part of the church where the font now stands, being at the west end, by the north entrance, leading up to the organ loft. Fonts were placed in the entrance of churches very early, but the ancient baptistery was a room adjoining to the church, in the middle of which stood the font. Saint Martin's chapel was originally endowed with lands for the maintenance of a priest to say masses for the souls of the founders, and in this chapel bishop Alcock held an ordination in 1495. Chantries † were dissolved 1st Edward VI., and in bishop Gooderick's day, the images, shrines, altars, &c. in this chapel or chantry were demolished, pursuant to his injunction, dated at Ely 4th October 1541. Indeed, it is said, the people began to demolish such images, &c. before the injunction was issued. Under James I. the messuages and lands formerly belonging to Saint Martin's chantry, and four acres of *lamp* land, were granted to L. Johnston for forty years; and on the 31st October 1670, the town-bailiff of Wisbech was ordered to pay £5. to the discoverer of a rent charge of 11*s.* 8*d.* per annum, due from lands late of the chantry of Saint Martin, in Wisbech, the arrears of which, being £30., were then paid.

A.D. 1546. 1604.

* May not this have been the present vestry? In 1475, the chapel of the Holy Virgin is said to have been lately erected. The chapel of the Holy Trinity is not mentioned until 1502.

† Under the title of "Chantry," lands and houses were bequeathed to particular churches for maintaining priests, who should daily perform mass for the souls of the founders, and such other persons as were specified in the deed of endowment; there were forty-seven such belonging to St. Paul's at the time of the reformation. Chapels were separate places of worship, endowed for the same purpose.

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There are galleries both on the north and south sides of the church; on the latter, a gallery was heretofore erected at the expense of the corporation, and presented to secretary Thurloe, out of gratitude for many services rendered by him to the town, which, in the late alteration of the interior of the church, has been re-arranged and divided for more general accommodation. Besides which galleries, there is one at the east end, probably the ancient rood loft, which always stood over and across the nave at the entrance of the chancel, where the image of our Saviour on the cross was placed, with those of the Virgin Mary and St. John, and sometimes rows of saints, and was so called from the rood or crucifix originally set up in the middle of it, and where the musicians played. Some parts of the liturgy were here sung previous to the change of religion. These rood lofts were common to all churches before the reformation. Very few of them now remain perfect, for the before-mentioned injunction extended to the demolishing of these erections, in the fitting up of the churches, as well as to the destruction of the images. To this east gallery, a very considerable addition has been lately made for the accommodation of sittings for the inhabitants. The custom of ringing a bell at five in the morning in summer, and at six in the winter, is kept up, and the "Curfew" tolls at nine in the evening.

President Henault, * in an interesting inquiry into different matters of antiquity, has this passage on the subject of the law of the curfew bell, by which every inhabitant of England was obliged to extinguish his

* President Henault was a celebrated French historian, who died in 1771.

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fires and candles at eight in the evening. "This," he says, "has been usually alleged as the institution of a "capricious tyrant; but this law was so far from being "absolutely tyrannical, that it was an ancient regulation "of the police, established among all the towns of the "north, and particularly among the monasteries. These "houses being built of wood and covered with thatch, "so cautious a regulation to prevent fire was an object A.D. "worthy a prudent legislator." In 1662, it was ordered 1662. that from the 2d February to the 1st November yearly, prayers should, according to ancient custom, be read immediately after the toll of the bell at six in the morning, and from 1st November to 2d February at ten.

There used to be a peal of eight bells, which were re-cast in the year 1823, when the present esteemed vicar, the Rev. A. Jobson, D. D. gave two additional ones at his own expense, making ten, which send forth a sonorous peal on all joyous occasions.* Previously, the oldest bore date A. D. 1566, another 1608, and a third 1640.† A passing bell, as is usual elsewhere, is rung on the decease of any inhabitant. Notice was thus

* The bells (of which the ropes had brass and sometimes silver rings at the end for the hands) were anciently rung by the priests themselves, afterwards by their servants. *Fosbroke*, vol. i. p. 105.

† Crowland is said to have had the first ring of bells in England, which were put up in king Edgar's reign, about the year 960, and were six in number. Bells are said to have been introduced into churches about the year 400, by Paulinus, bishop of Nola, in Campania, but no mention is made of a peal of bells before 860. The practice of ringing changes on bells is said to be peculiar to England. The custom commenced with the Saxons, and was common before the conquest. The invention of a ring of bells apparently gave rise to steeples for their reception, as there is a general correspondence in the date of both.

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originally given of the approaching dissolution, not of the actual death, of the person, that the people might offer a prayer for the departing soul, and the priest might hasten to administer extreme unction.

Wisbech is one of the oldest possessions of the church of Ely. In 1232, the living was a rectory, and valued at fifty marks, (£33. 6*s*. 8*d*.) twenty years before the first endowment of the vicarage; the bishop of Ely being the patron of it. The old coucher book of Ely is said to prove that the church of Wisbech had, in the year 1251, a tenth part of the money paid to the bishop for the agistment of stock. In 1252, Hugh de Northwold, bishop of Ely, appropriated the church of Wisbech to the convent of Ely, and endowed * the vicarage with all small

* The first endowment is as follows: To all the faithful in Christ to whom these presents shall come, Hugo de Norwold, by the grace of God, bishop of Ely, sendeth health in the Lord:—Know ye, that Mr. John de Cadamo, appointed parson of the church of Wisbech in our presence, hath given and granted to our beloved Mr. William de Norwold, the vacant vicarage of the aforesaid church of Wisbech, with all its appurtenances, reserving to himself the tithes of flax and wool; he also yielded to the same the tithe of foldage and piscary; also the tithe of all lambs, cheese, and butter; of geese, calves, pigs, and all the oblations and revenues of the whole altarage; also the manors, as well of the vicarage as of the chapel, which is from the fosse of the castle to the sea, and as far as it returns towards Elm. He also granted to the same (saving the tithes) two acres of land near the manor of the vicarage, and all the tithes of the mills, and the land he bought of the convent of Spinctus, (Spinney) for the service of the chapel, to hold of his favor. In testimony whereof we have, with the consent of the said Mr. John, caused our seal to be set to this present deed. Given at Downham upon the day of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, and in the year of our Lord 1252.

William de Norwold was bound to find a lamp burning before the high altar continually, from vespers until the whole service by night and day was finished.

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tithes.* And in the year 1275, Hugh de Balsham made a second endowment,† and assigned to the monks‡ of Ely certain tithes of corn between the banks

* Selden contends that tithes were not introduced into England until towards the end of the eighth century, viz. A. D. 786, when parishes and ecclesiastical benefices came to be settled. About the year 794, Offa, king of Mercia, the most potent of all the Saxon kings of his time in this island, made a law, whereby he gave unto the church the tithes of all his kingdom.

† The second endowment is as follows: To all the faithful in Christ to whom these presents shall come, Hugo, by the grace of God, bishop of Ely, sendeth health in the Lord:—Know ye, that the church of Wisebeche being vacant, of which the collation doth of full right belong to us, we have assigned certain issues and profits belonging to the said church to the monks of Ely, for a certain use, viz. the tithes of corn between the bank of Wisbech and the fields of Leverington; the farm of the rector, with the farm of Killhus, and the granges standing thereon; the homage, with the whole yearly revenue of the same church, and a moiety of the hay of the land belonging to our manor, in the name of the parsonage. We, desirous of having regard to the burthen of William de Norwold, *vicar of the said church*, have resolved and ordained, that the *said vicar* and his successors shall have and receive, in the name of the vicarage, the arable land belonging to the said church; the tithe of corn, hay, pasture, and fisheries, and all tithes whatsoever proceeding from the fields, meadows, pasture, or pasture grounds, between the bank of Wisbech and the parish of Elm, together with a moiety of the tithe of hay of the land belonging to our manor, and all the tithe of the hay of the said parish; saving always to the said vicar and his successors, all the profits of *Altarage* of the church of Wisbech, with the tithe of wool and flax, and all other yearly profits belonging to the same church, with this exception, that if the said lands, from which the monks receive the tithes of corn, shall be overflowed with waters, the said monks shall receive the tithes of flax, hay, and pasture proceeding from off the said lands; and the said vicar and his successors, and the said monks, shall bear the charges of repairing the chancel in their proportions. In witness whereof our seal is affixed to these presents. Given at Downham on the eve of the blessed apostle James, in the year of our Lord 1275.—By altarage, is meant the tithes of wool, lambs, calves, pigs, and other small tithes, with the offerings due.

‡ The clergy were formed into two great divisions—regular and secular. The first, or *regular* clergy, were so denominated, because they were under an obligation to live according to certain rules prescribed them by Saint Augustine or Saint Benedict. There were several distinct societies of the

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of Wisbech and the fields of Leverington, the rectory house, and the house belonging to Kilhus chapel, and half the tithe hay of the demesne; and he ordained that the vicar should have all the arable land belonging to the church, and the whole tithe of corn, hay, &c. from the fields and pasture grounds between the bank of Wisbech and parish of Elm; and also the moiety of the tithe of all the demesnes, &c. When a taxation of the revenues of the clergy, by Pope Nicholas, took place in the year 1291,* (sixteen years after the second endowment) the valuation appears by the exchequer as under:

	£.	s.	d.
Ecclesia de Wisbech.....	26	13	4
Vicaria ejusdem	6	13	4†

Disputes afterwards arising between the monks of Ely and the vicars of Wisbech, an appeal was made to John Fordham, the then bishop, to settle the same, who determined such disputes by an award, dated 1st October 1420, which fully established the vicar's claim to tithe in its full extent.

regular clergy. The principal of these constituted an abbey; the second, a priory; the third, monks, friars, and nuns. The former seldom went out of their cloisters; the friars travelled about and preached in the neighbourhood. Every monk or friar used the tonsure, or shaved crown, an emblem, they said, of their hope of a crown of glory. The second division, or *secular* clergy, consisted of the bishops and parish ministers; they lived in the world abroad, without being shut up in convents and cloisters, as the regulars.

* By this taxation, all the taxes of the king, as well as of the pope, were regulated, until the survey in the 26th year of Henry VIII., and according to which, benefices under a certain value are exempted from the restriction in the statute Henry VIII. concerning pluralities.

† Afterwards, the valuation in king Henry the eighth's time, in Lib. Beneficiorum, is stated to be £26. 13s. 4d.

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The high fen, containing 4,387 acres, was not at the time of the endowment, between the banks of Wisbech and the fields of Leverington, but bishop Morton, by his new leam from Peterborough to Guyhirn, altered the course of the river, and made new banks. After the high fen, from being common and waste land,* became drained and inclosed, about the year 1664, it then, for the first time, produced corn, the tithe whereof was claimed by the dean and chapter, who have since enjoyed it.

Several of the vicars for many successive years were contented to receive certain compositions for their tithes, but in the year 1803, the vicar instituted a claim, and made a formal demand of all the tithes in kind of the grass lands, and of all other vicarial tithes arising within the two parishes of Wisbech St. Peter and Wisbech St. Mary, which he first submitted to the owners and occupiers of lands, who, however, set up a modus for exemption from such tithes. The parties, therefore, became at issue in the court of exchequer, and after a suit which lasted nearly five years, the claim of the vicar to tithe in kind was established, so that the vicarage is now estimated at £2,000. per annum and upwards, while the rectory, which is in the hands of the dean and chapter of Ely, (and originally of the greater value) is not more than £1200. The vicar has in his gift the chapel of Guyhirn, worth about £100. per annum.

Whilst treating of the history of the church of Wisbech, it would be an act of ingratitude in the compiler, as one

* An award of commissioners, made in 1664, proves that these lands were then worth only 1s. 6d. per acre per annum: in 1719 and 1724, they are stated at only 2s. an acre, and are now worth to let 35s. per acre.

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of the parishioners, to omit bearing some testimony of respect towards the present esteemed and very venerable and benevolent vicar, Dr. Jobson. It is not intended to dwell upon his private virtues, great and estimable as they are, or to recount the praises which are due to him; but the repeated public acts of munificence exercised by him towards the parish ought not to be passed over in silence. It is a signal blessing, when the Lord raises up pious and able men in church or state to succeed one another; and it behoves us all to pray for a succession of useful men, who may endeavour to complete the good designs of their predecessors, and make way for the usefulness of their successors. When far beyond human observation, and when we and many generations shall have been swept away, the name of Dr. Jobson will be recollected with gratitude and esteem. He graces the station which he holds, his conduct has been at all times marked with affability, and his wealth employed with liberality in supporting the several institutions in the town, and for the most important of all human ends, the service of true religion and virtue. However unwilling to wound the private feelings of this excellent pastor and friend, still a few of his public donations must be glanced at. He endowed the national school for girls (conjointly with the late highly respectable character, John Edes, esq.*) by a donation on his part of £500. He also contributed largely to the building of the boys' school.

* This gentleman died in 1824: he was a magistrate for the isle of Ely, and one of the conservators of the honourable corporation of Bedford level. Having, in the early part of his life, devoted much time and attention to works of drainage, he acquired considerable experience and local knowledge, the value of which was highly esteemed. He lived respected, and died sincerely lamented.

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He erected the upper gallery on the south side of the church, and gave one moiety of the charge of building a gallery on the north side. He entirely ceiled the roof of the church at his own expense, besides contributing a moiety towards new glazing the church windows. He also gave £500. to found a sunday school for boys and girls in perpetuity. He furnished two additional bells, as before noticed, to the former number of eight. Besides these particular acts, he contributed largely to other improvements in the church, especially in transforming the seats, thereby giving additional accommodation in sittings for a greater number of his parishioners. So many and repeated acts called forth the grateful expressions of the inhabitants, who, having witnessed the exemplary zeal and unremitting diligence with which he discharged his pastoral duties, and his pious care and regard for his church, and being desirous of testifying their sense of his distinguished merits, as well as to convey the tribute of their esteem, determined on requesting their worthy vicar to sit to some eminent painter for his portrait, to be preserved in the town hall, with whose wishes he complied.*

* At a meeting of the magistrates and capital burgesses of Wisbech, held at the sessions house, the gentlemen present, being unanimous in expressing their sense of the distinguished merits of their vicar, and in determining on the propriety of showing him some public mark of respect:—It was resolved, that the following address should be presented to him, on behalf of themselves and their fellow townsmen.

The address and reply were as under:

"Wisbech, 15th November 1823.

"To the Rev. Abraham Jobson, D.D. vicar of Wisbech.

"We, the undersigned, viewing with the highest and most sincere "satisfaction, the continued acts of munificence you have so frequently exer-"cised towards your parish, feel anxiously solicitous that some memorial

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In transforming the seats just referred to in the church, several small thin copper coins, of the size of a farthing, were found underneath, with a floor composed of flat

"should be preserved of so kind and generous a benefactor. The two "excellent charity schools in the town testify your great liberality, and, "exclusive of other important public and private charitable donations, the "many improvements in the church for the increased accommodation of your "parishioners, made at your private expense, are too well known to require "any remark. You have discharged your arduous duties as vicar of this "parish for nearly twenty-five years, with exemplary fidelity and constancy, "whilst your rectitude of conduct, genuine benevolence, and urbanity of "manners, have gained you the warm and general respect of your parishion-"ers. We, therefore, do make our earnest request to you, as our vicar and "friend, that you will sit to some eminent painter for your portrait, to be "preserved in our town hall, as a token of the esteem entertained for you, "and to afford, in future times, a pleasing remembrance of your character "and personal virtues.

"William Rayner, Steed Girdlestone,
"William Watson, Hugh Jackson,
"Robert Hardwicke, Jeremiah Jackson,
"John Edes, James Usill,
"William Hardwicke, William Swansborough.'
"H. J. Nicholls,

"To the Rev. Abraham Jobson, D.D.
"Vicar of Wisbech."

To which the vicar replied:

"Gentlemen,

"In the course of a long life, few things have fallen to "my lot so grateful to me, as this proof of the estimation in which I am held "among you; and prepared as I am to comply with your wishes in all "respects, my assent to the very flattering request you have thus kindly "made me cannot be withheld. In any thing I may have been disposed and "enabled to do in your service, I wholly disclaim all pretensions to merit; "but this I may truly say, that it has always been my anxious desire to fulfil "to the utmost the duties of my responsible situation as your vicar, and I "have no wish to continue longer in this world, than I can be useful and "acceptable to you. I am wholly unable to express the depth of my feelings

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glazed tiles.* One of the coins in the possession of the compiler has the words "Wisbitch H I T on one side, and "Henry Tunard," with the bakers' arms, on the other. On another of the coins are the words "King's Lyn Farthing "1669," with a sort of arms on the reverse. The tiles so found were flat, about three quarters of an inch in thickness, and four inches square on the surface, glazed, with a bar dividing six cross crosslets in a well defined shield. It is said that the floors of ancient chapels used

1663."

"on this occasion, and can only assure you of the sincerity of my gratitude "and attachment to you and my other parishioners, and of my solicitude to "promote, by every means in my power, both the temporal and eternal "welfare of you all.

"ABRAHAM JOBSON.

"To the Magistrates and Corporation of Wisbech.
"16th November, 1823."

*See Engraving.—On conferring upon this subject with a very intelligent and highly respected friend, (William Peckover, esq. F.A.S.) he made the following judicious and learned remark: "That although the quotation "from Dr. Ducarel was strong against him, yet, on a leaf further in his "'Normandy,' a great doubt is expressed, whether these tiles are not of a "later date, and placed there during king John's stay in that city. From "Hearne's curious Discourses, coats of arms are supposed to have been first "used in the time of Charlemagne, but not generally adopted until the "crusades. King Richard I. was our first monarch who had them on his "great seal. From a prosecution in the reign of Henry II. it appears, armorial "bearings were then confined to the kings and nobility, but in the time of "Edward II. they are stated to have become more common. Devices on "shields are certainly of very ancient origin, as they are frequently "mentioned in Homer, and afterwards by the Roman writers; but as "these devices were not hereditary, they cannot be considered in the "nature of coats of arms."

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to be formed of tiles,* for instance, that of Prior Crawden's, at Ely; and Dr. Ducarel informs us, that the floor of the great guard chamber of William the the Conqueror, at Caen, in Normandy, is paved with tiles about five inches square, and charged with coats of arms.

The vicarage house is on the south side of the church, and adjoining the church yard, standing in a piece of fine pasture and glebe gland, containing about four acres, with a walled garden for fruit, and a kitchen garden, coach house, stable, and convenient outbuildings near adjoining; besides which, there are forty-seven acres of glebe land lying dispersed, viz. ten acres in Old field, twenty acres in Great Boleness field, fifteen acres in Redmore field, and two acres in Crabbe marsh, all in Wisbech St. Peter's. There were formerly twelve acres in Wisbech St. Mary's, abutting upon the church yard, which were sold to redeem the land-tax. The two acres in Crabbe marsh were allotted to the vicar from the common so called, consisting of two hundred and two acres, formerly embanked from the sea, and lying waste and uninclosed until 1664. The vicarage house is very commodious, and, by an addition thereto made by Dr. Bull,† a former vicar, forms altogether a very complete and excellent family residence.

* Fosbroke observes, that in the Norman centuries mosaic work was adopted in pavements, exhibiting scriptural stories, painted upon glazed bricks and tiles, and in succeeding ages bricks were made equilateral, about four inches square. The use of these bricks was confined to consecrated places. Arms are often impaled and quartered, interspersed with fleurs de lis. *Fosbroke*, vol. i. p. 105.

† The new part was built at his private expense about the year 1741.

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About the year 1782,* a piece of waste ground, adjoining the old church yard on the south side, was added to the then burial ground. In the centre of this space was anciently a pond, called Chapel Pond,† which was then filled up, and the ground acquired by the filling up the pit, with the adjoining waste, was surrounded with a wall. Notwithstanding this augmentation, the space for the interment of the dead is so crowded, that additional ground is become absolutely requisite, which there is no doubt will ere long be obtained, as the present worthy vicar is at this time in treaty for the purchase of land for that purpose.

In the year 1711, an organ was set up in the church by C. Quarles, of Cambridge, which having fallen into decay, a subscription was entered into by the inhabitants in 1787, for a new organ, which was built by Mr. Green, of London, (who erected one for his late majesty king George III. at Windsor) at the expense of £500.‡ and an application was made to the capital burgesses, by order of a public vestry, to appropriate a sum of money out of the revenues of the corporation, as a salary for an organist,§ and, in consideration of the

* A stone in the wall records this addition to have been made "by order of vestry."

† Does not the name of this pond, "Chapel Pond," seem to strengthen the presumption that there was, at some period, a place of divine worship in Timber Market, as mentioned in a following page?

‡ It is said that organs were sent to this country by Pope Vitalian, in the seventh century. The introduction of them into churches tended greatly to promote that delight which was taken by our ancestors at a very early period in the practice of psalm singing.

The most magnificent and powerful organ known is at Haarlem, in Holland, which contains 8,000 pipes, 64 stops, 4 rows of keys, and 8 pair of bellows.

§ The organist was anciently no separate officer, but of the priesthood. We hear of an archdeacon playing upon an organ in the Saxon æra. *Fosbroke*, vol. i. p. 96.

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nomination of such organist being left to, and vested in the corporation, the capital burgesses appropriated a salary for an organist accordingly, and in the year 1789, the then capital burgesses, with the concurrence of the vicar, appointed Mr. George Guest to that office, who was pronounced by Dr. Randall, musical professor, of Cambridge, to be a performer of singular merit. That gentleman has now passed thirty-eight years of his life in the service of the burgesses and the parish at large, with uniform diligence, great credit, and without a single complaint.

Although the worthy vicar has spared no expense, from his private purse, in endeavouring to render the utmost accommodation for his parishioners, by providing increased sittings within the walls of the present edifice, still the church cannot be made to contain more than 1800 persons, whilst there is a population of about 7000. It has been already stated that much additional room has been gained by the erection of new galleries, and an improved arrangement of the seats, but still the parish church being incapable of holding more than one fourth of the inhabitants, supposing every seat occupied, and in the twelve years preceding this time (1827) a sum of £ 3000. and upwards (a considerable part of which was at the sole expense of the vicar) having been expended upon alterations and additions, and numerous families still constantly applying in vain for seats, it became at length a serious consideration, whether a chapel of ease, for the performance and celebration of divine worship, ought not to be erected in the town. The zealous vicar, fully alive to the necessity of further accommodation for his parishioners, almost anticipated their wishes, by making a most noble offer for the effective

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endowment of a chapel by the conveyance in fee simple of a real estate, exceeding in value £ 5000. and by the rents and profits thereof, to make provision for the minister of the intended chapel. Happy is the man who is his own executor! This liberal offer of the vicar was met in a corresponding manner by the co-operation of his grateful parishioners, and a subscription was accordingly set on foot, in shares of £ 50. each, for the erection of a chapel. To promote which subscription, the vicar set the example by taking twenty shares, amounting to £ 1000. independent of the provision made by him for the endowment. The money subscribed is proposed to be repaid, with interest, from the sale of nine hundred sittings, (the remaining three hundred being intended to be free and gratuitous) and of the burial vaults. The sum required for the purchase of the intended site and erection of the chapel will be about £7500. and more than £ 6000.* was subscribed in a very short period.

* The following is a list of the names of the subscribers to the intended chapel of ease in the town of Wisbech, with the number of shares taken by each individual:

Subscribers.	No. of Shares.	Amount. £.
The Rev. Abraham Jobson, D.D.	20	1000
The Corporation of Wisbech	4	200
William Watson, esq. F.A.S.	5	250
William Rayner, esq.	4	200
The Rev. Jeremiah Jackson	6	300
Hugh Jackson, esq.	8	400
The Rev. T. P. Holmes	6	300
Steed Girdlestone, esq.	4	200
Messrs. J. and H. M. Usill	4	200
Major General Hardwicke, F.R.S. and L. R.A.F.	2	100
	63	£ 3150

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A piece of ground has already been purchased, and a bill is at this time before parliament, "for erecting and "endowing a chapel of ease in Wisbech," and as soon as the royal assent is obtained, the building will be forthwith commenced.

Subscribers.	No. of Shares.	Amount £.
Brought forward	63	3150
The Rev. Wm. Gale Townley	2	100
Robert Hardwicke, esq. M.D.	1	50
Abraham Uaill, esq.	2	100
Robert Francis Pate, esq.	2	100
John Wing, esq.	2	100
John Johnson, esq.	2	100
Mr. Richard Baxter	2	100
Robert Baxter	2	100
Mrs. Stevens	2	100
John Johnson, esq. Leverington	2	100
Robert Gaye, esq.	2	100
Mr. J. C. Curwen	2	100
Edward Jackson	2	100
William Swansborough	2	100
George Lefever	2	100
Samuel Marriott	2	100
C. T. Sculthorpe	2	100
Charles Boucher	2	100
Joseph Taylor	2	100
The Rev. William Hardwicke	1	50
The Rev. R. J. King	1	50
Mrs. Bellamy	1	50
Mr. Henry Herring	1	50
John Pope	1	50
Robert Ward	1	50
Enderby Laughton	1	50
G. A. Ward	1	50
John Burgess	1	50
Henry Leach	1	50
T. S. Watson	1	50
	111	£5550

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The dean and chapter of Ely have, from about 11,000 acres of land in this parish, the rectorial or great tithes, which had been appropriated to the prior and convent of Ely by bishop Balsham, under the before-mentioned endowment in the year 1275.* It is said, there was in ancient times a second church in the town of Wisbech Saint Peter's, dedicated to Saint George, and standing in the Timber Market, though no record or trace of such building is now remaining. Amongst the guilds before enumerated, was one called Saint George's,† situated in that part of the town, which may have given rise to the opinion that a place of religious worship

Subscribers.	No. of Shares.	Amount. £.
Brought forward	111	5550
Mr. William Bell	1	50
Thomas Moore	1	50
William Chamberlin, Jun.	1	50
F. Groom	1	50
Edward Cooch	1	50
William Beales	1	50
Mrs. Palmer	1	50
Mr. James Smith	1	50
Thomas Hall	1	50
H. J. Elsey	1	50
J. B. Palmer	1	50
William Holmes	1	50
John Abbott	1	50
Matthew Johnson	1	50
W. T. Cleeve	1	50
	126	£6,300

* These tithes are now let by leases renewable every seven years; but the estates in Wisbech Barton manor are let on leases for lives. Such mode of letting was adopted very early; for, by a Saxon charter, there is granted, 'terram quatuor manentium pro diebus trium hominum;' which was for three lives, as used at this day. *Hearne's Discourses*, vol. i. p. 9.

† See page 160.

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once stood there. Besides the church at Wisbech Saint Mary's, (an adjoining village) there were several chapels other than that at Guyhirn, viz. one at Murrow, a second at Pigge's Drove, and a third at Killhus, or Killhushing. All the livings in the neighbourhood are very valuable, that of Wisbech exceeding £2,000.; Leverington, £2,100. and upwards; Newton, more than £1,200., and Tid St. Giles between £800. and £900.

The monuments and other memorials are rather numerous, some of which, within the church,* are here selected, commencing with the *most ancient*, which is that of THOMAS DE BRAUNSTONE, who was constable of the castle of Wisbech, and dying in 1401, was interred in the south aisle of the church, where is a gravestone, with his effigy engraved on brass plates. He is represented under a rich Gothic canopy, in plate armour and painted helmet, with a lion at his feet,† and an inscription round the verge of the stone: "Cy gist Thomas "de Braunstone,‡ jadis Conestable du Chatel de "Wisebeche, qui morut le vingt septieme jour de Maii, "l'an de notre seignour, mil cccc primer. D l'alme de "qui Dieu par sa grace ait mercy. Amen."

* There are various opinions as to the time when interments in churches first took place. St. Cuthbert, about 680, is said to have been the first who added yards to the churches for the reception of the dead. Anciently, cemeteries were a mile from the monastery, and from the seventh century, abbots were buried in the chapter-house, and monks in the cloister. The spirit of the church was always adverse to the burying in churches. Monuments were most usually erected along the highway-side, to put passengers in mind that they are, as those thereby commemorated were, mortal.

† The cross-legged figures are to be placed between 1224 and 1334. Fosbroke.

‡ This name has been heretofore differently written, sometimes Braunstone, as above, and by others, Bramstone. Of this latter name, is a highly respectable family residing at Skreens, near Chelmsford, in Essex, who are said to be descendants of this Thomas de Bramstone or Braunstone.

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There are several other monuments worthy of notice, amongst which are the following:

In the chancel, on the north side, is a handsome monument to Matthias Taylor, esq. with the following inscription:

"The memory of the just is blessed." Prov. x. 7.* "Matthias Taylor, Esq. (5th and youngest son of "Richard Taylor, Gent. deceased) departed this life "February 2d, 1633, in the 67th year of his age." It is stated, that in his minority, he was brought up in the trade of a linen dealer, and by honest industry gained a large estate; and that he was chosen one of the capital burgesses of this town, "and of the number, "without any dislocation, continued to his dying "day. Also he had the constableship of the castle "conferred upon him, and by the space of twenty years "before his death, was made justice of the peace and "quorum under his majesty in the isle of Ely.

Berney Bramstone, esq. LL.D. sat in parliament several years for the county of Essex, and retired from its representation in 1799. *Hutchesson's MSS.* Lysons, in his Britannia, calls the name "Braunstone." It is to be regretted that at this period the stone is so defaced, by the brass whereon the name was engraved being entirely broken off, that it cannot now with accuracy be ascertained. Mr. Stennett, a merchant of Boston, living there between 1713 and 1734, who was said to be a fine draughtsman, drew the churches of Boston and Walpole, and amongst many other monuments, that of *Bramstone* of Wisbech.

* Epitaphs or monumental inscriptions are very ancient. In 516, king Arthur's epitaph was inscribed on the inside of his leaden coffin: the next known in this country in point of antiquity is that of St. Augustine, first archbishop of Canterbury.

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"The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich. He "bringeth low, and raiseth up.

"The aforesaid Matthias took to his wife Jane Booth, "of a generous parentage, whose effigies, together with "his own, standeth here erected, by whom he had three "sons and four daughters.

"VIRTUE EXCELLS EVERY ESCUTCHEON."*

On a brass, under this monument, is an inscription to Elizabeth Emerson, wife of the Rev. Thomas Emerson, vicar of this church, who died on the vigil of Saint Thomas the Apostle, 1625.

On the same wall, is a handsome monument of marble and alabaster, with two figures kneeling before a desk, being those of a man and woman. He is in armour, and she dressed in black, with a black hat, according to the fashion of those times, with a smaller figure in a niche under a canopy; and on a tablet above is written—

"To the memory of their dear and deceased father, "Thomas Parke, esq. and Audrey Parke, theire mother "yet living, Sir Miles Sandys, knight, and dame "Elizabeth his wife, daughter and heir of the said "Thomas Parke, erected this monument. The said

* Plato's rule, that an epitaph should be comprised in four verses, (*Hearne's Discourses*) is here transgressed. This monument is noticed in the Gentleman's Magazine of 1774 as follows: "There is a "monument in Wisbech church of a linen draper, who is mentioned "to have risen from nothing, and to have acquired great riches by his "industry, and at last was made constable of the castle in the reign of "Charles I."

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"Thomas Parke was borne of a worthy family in the "county of Huntingdon, was a justice of the peace of "the isle of Ely, and high-sheriff of the counties of "Cambridge and Huntingdon, and by his last will gave "many large legacies to charitable uses,*—who lived "religiously, virtuously, and generously, to the age of "87 years, and died 1st January 1630."

Within the chancel rails, on the north side of the communion table, is a mural monument to the memory of Thomas Edwards, esq. high-bailiff of the liberty of the isle of Ely, deputy lieutenant and justice of the peace, who married Camilla, daughter of Thomas Browne, of Elsing Hall, in the county of Norfolk, esq. by whom he had seven sons and eleven daughters;—died 15th July 1705.

On the south side of the communion table, is a neat monument to the memory of Hannah, the wife of Abraham Jobson, vicar of the parish, who died much lamented, 29th August 1803, aged 51.

On the north side of the chancel wall, on the left of Matthias Taylor's, is a monument to the Rev. William Coldwell, prebendary of Ely, and fifty-one years vicar of this church, died 1702.†

On the south side of the chancel wall, is a monument to Caroline Burroughs, wife of Dr. Burroughs,

* See title—"Parke," in Public Charities.

† His son, Thomas Coldwell, esq. was buried in Welwyn church, in Hertfordshire, to whom a monument is erected by the side of that of the amiable Dr. Young, the celebrated author of the Night Thoughts.

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vicar, third daughter of Dr. Butts, late lord bishop of Ely, who died 31st July 1751, in childbed, leaving an only son.

On the pavement of the chancel, is a marble slab to the memory of the said Dr. Burroughs, who died in 1773, aged 52; and of Jane Burroughs, his wife, daughter of Thomas Audley of Upwell, who died in 1798.

Over the vestry door, is another neat monument of recent date, which expresses, that in a vault within the vestry are deposited the remains of Elizabeth, the wife of William Rayner, esq.* who died 6th December 1820, aged 68.

On the floor of the chancel, are several inscriptions on marble slabs, of many of the ancient families formerly resident at Wisbech, viz.

Lawrance Banyer, esq.
Henry Ferrour, esq. and Margaret his wife, who had seventeen children, and died 1672, aged 82.
William, son of the Hon. Richard Fiennes, esq. who married the daughter of the Rev. William Coldwell, vicar, and died in 1689, aged 35.
Jane Balam, who died in 1690.
William Hunston, esq. in 1691.
Thomas Stevens, in 1696.
Edward Southwell, in 1707.

* This gentleman has passed an active and useful life within the town of Wisbech, as a merchant of high integrity and strict honour. He held the command of the volunteers for more than ten years, and afterwards, in 1823, discharged the official duties of high-sheriff of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon.

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James Anthony, esq. in 1732.
Alice, wife of Ezekiel Flanner, in 1753.
John Bellamy, vicar, who died in 1714, aged 45; and of Rebecca, his wife.
Rev. John Clarkson and wife.
John Whinnel, who died in 1715.

Also a few more recent slabs to the memory of

Catherine Girdlestone, obt. 15th June 1808, aged 34.
The Rev. Zachariah Stichall, A.M. curate, who died in 1808.
Hannah and Christian Fraser, daughters of Alexander Fraser, M.D. who died, one in 1822, aged 19, and the other in 1823, aged 18.

In the town or south chancel, are eight achievements or escutcheons of the family of Southwell, on the east wall of the chancel.

A violent storm, which happened in 1613 and 1614, was commemorated until the year 1750, by an inscription on this wall, which was effaced at the time when the monument erected to the memory of Edward Southwell, esq. was fixed up, after a transcript had been made of it as follows:

"To the immortal praise of God Almighty, that "saveth his people in all adversities—Be it kept in per- "petual memory, that on the feast of All Saints, being "the 1st November, in the year of our Lord 1613, late in "the night, *the sea* broke in, through the violence of a "north east wind meeting with the spring tide, and over- "flowed all Marshland, with this town of Wisbech, both "on the north side and the south, and almost the whole "hundred round about, to the great danger of men's

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" lives, and the loss of some. Besides the exceeding " great loss which these countries sustained through the " breach of banks and spoil of corn, cattle, and houseing, " which could not be estimated.

" The next year following, i. e. the year of our Lord " 1614, upon the 23d day of March, this country was " again overflowed with the *fresh waters*, which came " down in such great abundance, through the extraordi- " nary great snow that fell that year in January and " February, that not only this town, whereof the south " side only was lost, but the greatest part of the grounds " within the south Eau Bank in Holland, from Spalding " to Tidd St. Giles, was drowned, and almost wholly " lost for that year.

" Moreover, a great part of Marshland, from their " bank called the Edge, between their towns and the " Smeeth, to the new Podike, was lost through divers " breaches between Salters Load and Downham bridge. " In conclusion, many towns in Norfolk, confining with " Marshland, and most part of this whole isle of Ely."

" D. O. M. S.

" O frugum fœcunda domus nimiumque beata,
" Si male vicinis non premereris aquis.
" Quas, tu cum sedeas imis in vallibus, a te
" Quis prohibere undas, ni deus ipse potest?
" Scilicet in fluctus nequicquam tenditur agger,
" Atque infida suo sedet arena mari.
" Quod si te impietas, fraudes, scortatio, fœdus,
" Commaculant, ab aquis cur velet ista deus?*

* Of which a reverend friend, a former curate of Wisbech, has given the following translation, which he has kindly permitted to be transcribed :

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" Posuit Joshua Blaxton in theologia Baccalaureus & " hujus ecclesiæ dignus vicarius."

To the east wall of this chancel are now affixed several monuments to the family of Southwell.

To Edward Southwell, who married the daughter of Edward Dymoke, esq. of the family of the champion, born in 1694, and died in 1748, aged 54; also Jane, his widow, who died in 1761, aged 68.

Edward Southwell, gent. who died 1702, aged 41.

Henry Southwell, esq. who died in 1762, aged 67.

Francis, his widow, who died in 1785, aged 70, leaving three daughters—Frances, who died single; Elizabeth, who married John Warren, D.D. Lord Bishop of Bangor; Mary, wife of Sir James Eyre, Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas.

John Southwell, esq. son of the last named Henry, who died in 1771, aged 35.

Mrs. Frances Southwell, eldest daughter of Henry Southwell, who died in 1779, aged 51.

Edward Southwell, son of Edward and Jane, who died in 1787, aged 59.*

Against the south wall of the town chancel are placed

O fruitful fane! too happy would'st thou be,
Wer't thou from dread of inundation free,
When floods shall menace this low marshy plain,
'Tis God alone their fury can restrain.
In vain its banks the rising waters brave,
In vain the sand repels the foaming wave;
But should foul crimes thy sacred walls disgrace,
In help divine thy trust how canst thou place?

* The monument of this gentleman is decorated by a figure of Hope, from the chisel of Nollekens, so beautiful that, were its position more favourable, it could not fail to excite general admiration.

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for public inspection, the Books of Martyrs, with a tablet expressing as follows: "Robert Gooderidge, son of "James Gooderidge, blacksmith, borne in Wisbech, "deceased in London on Easter-day 1635, gave by his "will £8. to buy these three books of martyrs, and "to have them set in the church of Wisbech aforesaid, "which was performed according to his will in the "year 1636."

On the pavement in the town chancel are memorials to the following persons.

R. Stevêns, who died in 1696.
Burgis Finch, in 1715.
John Finch, in 1719.
Rev. Burgis Finch, in 1748.
William Ickwich, in 1760.
William Skrimshire, in 1814.
Elizabeth, daughter of Charles and Elizabeth Metcalfe, in 1824.
Thomas Cock, merchant, in 1722.
John Cuthbert, in 1728.
Mary Purkis, in 1734.
Thomas Bener, in 1756.
Susan, wife of Edward Cobb, of Snettisham, in 1733.
William Long, in 1782.
Edward Stewart, in 1794.

Also a slab to the memory of George Worral, and Mary, his wife, only daughter of Dr. John Haslewood, S.T.P., Judge Advocate in king Charles the 2d's reign. On his right side lies Amey Haslewood, widow of the said Dr. John Haslewood, and mother of Mrs. Worral, (said to have been related to queen Mary and queen Anne) died in 1736, aged 75.

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Over one of the arches leading into the other chancel, is a monument erected by Sarah Delamore, to the memory of Mrs. Amey Worral, out of respect to her excellent virtues and disinterested friendship, who departed this life September 4th, 1795, aged 60, only daughter of George Worral, and Mary, his wife.

And opposite thereto, on the south wall, is a monument to Isaac Gann, esq. who died in 1763.

Another slab commemorates Nicholas Sanford, descended from an ancient and religious house of Sanford Hall, in Shropshire, who died 1638, aged 75, whereon is the following inscription:

" He was
" A patterne for townesmen, whom we may enrole,
" For at his own charge this towne hee freed of tole."

In the south aisle, on the wall, is a monument to Theophilus Buckworth, esq. who died 1698; and another to his wife Sarah.

Also to Admiral Fox, who died in 1763; and
Robert Harris, apothecary of London, who died in 1722.*

At the south-west wall, near to the library, is a monument to Dr. Massey, who died in 1773, aged 79, descended from a very ancient and respectable family in Cheshire: erected by Edward Cross, gent. who married his only daughter and heiress.

* Mr. Harris was possessed of the estate called White Hall, on the north brink at Wisbech.

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In the south aisle, adjoining the middle aisle, are slabs to

Eleanor Taylor, who died in 1751.
Edward Warmoll, in 1772.

In the cross aisle, leading to the south wall :—
Thomas Fox, esq.
Thomas Abbott.

In the south aisle, under the south windows :—
Hugh Maplesden, who died in 1786.
Robert Twells, esq. in 1730.

At the west end :—
Robert Garnham, who died in 1792.
Catherine, wife of James Watson, in 1822.

On the north side of one of the naves, are two elegant modern monuments; one to Mary Gynn, widow, who died in 1811, aged 83; and the other to Eliza, William, and Thomas Hardwicke, daughter and sons of Thomas Hardwicke, commander of the Bengal artillery.*

On the wall of the north aisle, is a monument inscribed to William Moore, grandson of William Underwood, esq. who was one of the bailiffs of the Bedford level corporation, a deputy lieutenant, and justice of the peace, who died in 1802.

* See the services of this meritorious officer, (who has since been raised to the rank of major-general), under the title 'Biography.'

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In St. Martin's chapel are monuments to Thomas Wood, who married the daughter of Charles Vavazor, esq.

Also to the said Charles Vavazor, who died in 1750.

Also Sir Philip Vavazor,* who died in 1796.

Also Peter East, who died in 1713.

Also a small tablet to Alice Watson,† widow of Cooke Watson esq. who died 24th September 1808, aged 79.

In the cross aisle, at the entrance of the north door, are slabs to the memory of Richard Shepherd, esq. who died in 1823, and of Mr. and Mrs. Usill, the former of whom died in 1805, and the latter in 1824, with various others more recent, besides many old slabs which, though bearing marks of inscription, are too much defaced and obliterated to be deciphered.

A quotation from Addison may serve as a proper conclusion of this article: "When I look upon the tombs "of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when "I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate "desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents "on a tomb stone, my heart melts with compassion; "when I see the tombs of parents themselves, I consider "the vanity of grieving for those whom we must "quickly follow."

* He was high sheriff of the county of Cambridge in 1761, and knighted by his majesty on carrying up the address on the coronation.

† Alice Watson was the grand-daughter of Alice Jermy, descended from John Jermy, knight, by Margaret, his wife, one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Roger Bigott, earl of Norfolk, and earl marshall of England. temp. Edward II. See Blomfield's Norfolk, Title 'Aylsham.' Alice Watson was the venerable mother of the compiler of this work.

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The following vicars of Wisbech may be found on record :

POPISH.	A.D.
William de Norwold.....	1252
Dr. Rogers	1338
John Bolin	1349
William de Newton	1384
John Judde or Rudde	1401
John Ockham, LL.D.	1422
William Abyinton	——
John Clampain	1448
John Warkworth, D.D.	1472
William Gybbs	1473
William Doughty, LL. D.*	1494
John Wyatt	1503
Robert Cliffe, LL.D.	1525
John Cheesewright	——
William Lord	1537
William Hande	1544
Henry Ogle	1549
Hugh Margesson, A.B.	1554

PROTESTANT.	
Matthew Champion	1587
Joshua Blaxton, B.D.	1613
Thomas Emerson	1615
Edward Furnis, A.M.	1630
William Coldwell	1651
John Bellamy, A.M.....	1702

* He was rector also of Newton in 1495, and resigned that rectory in 1498 ; also rector of Elm in 1500, and chancellor of Ely.

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Thomas Cole, A.M.*	1714
Henry Bull, D.D.....	1721
Henry Burrough, LL.D.	1749
John Warren, D.D.†	1773
James Burslem, LL.D.‡	1779
Hon. and Rev. C. Lindsay, A.M.§	1787
Cæsar Morgan, D.D.	1795
Abraham Jobson, D.D.	1802

The list of vicars here introduced is believed to be correct, the same having been furnished by the Rev. Dr. Jobson; but mention is made of a vicar named "Lee," in Coles' MSS. in the troublesome times of Charles I. who, in December 1643, was accused of saying,—the parliament had wit enough, if they had but grace enough to use it—of calling a good minister (Mr. Alleston) "brother red face"—of drinking prince Rupert's health, and saying, upon the loss of Gainsborough, that Cromwell, as valiant as he was, turned his back in the face of his enemies, and bid his soldiers shift for themselves; and of preaching against extempore prayer, saying, it was vain babbling. Whereupon it is said that his living of Wisbech was sequestered. Some error has probably crept in, as to this gentleman having held the vicarage of Wisbech, or of its being sequestered as above-mentioned, as his name is not to be found in the parish register, or in the list of the Wisbech vicars.

* Promoted to the deanery of Norwich, and died at the deanery house 6th February 1731.

† Preferred to the bishopric of St. David's in 1779, and in 1783 translated to Bangor.

‡ The Rev. Dr. Burslem was appointed by his majesty to the vicarage, on its becoming void, by the election of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Warren, preferred to the bishopric of St. David's.

§ Youngest son of the earl Balcarras, and brother in law to the Rt. Hon. the earl of Hardwicke,—now bishop of Kildare, in Ireland.

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Registers.

The registering of baptisms, marriages, and burials in parishes commenced with the reformation, and was instituted by lord Cromwell 13th Henry VIII. 1522, whilst he was vicar-general to that king. By the canons of the church of England now in force, which date their authority from the beginning of the reign of king James I. 1603, one of them prescribes very minutely in what manner entries are to be made in parish registers, herein reciting the injunctions of 1538, and ordering an attested copy of the registers to be annually transmitted to the bishop of the diocese. It is said that most registers were re-copied at Elizabeth's succession, that all remains of popery in her sister's reign might be obliterated. Very few have been preserved in a more perfect state than those in Wisbech church, commencing with the year 1558, and in the early part of the register, there is the appearance of their having been transcribed. They are brought down to the present day with great regularity. From these registers an extract has been carefully made, shewing the actual number in each year of the several baptisms, marriages, and burials, from 1558 to 1826 inclusive.

Year.	Baptisms.	Marriages.*	Burials	Year.	Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials
1558	25	7	—	1566	53	23	39
1559	39	13	43	1567	43	18	26
1560	48	22	40	1568	47	23	84
1561	46	16	50	1569	39	15	55
1562	57	12	33	1570	44	21	50
1563	48	14	31	1571	43	14	42
1564	55	11	36	1572	52	10	38
1565	34	18	46	1573	50	14	52

* It has been computed, there are nine births to two marriages. Thirty-two years are reckoned to a generation, at the end of which period the whole human race is renewed. It is said 25,000000 of mankind die every year, 2853 every hour, and 47 every minute.

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Year.	Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials.	Year.	Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials.
1574	45	16	59	1616	44	37	146
1575	44	17	54	1617	82	47	105
1576	58	21	48	1618	67	32	88
1577	51	12	59	1619	86	24	78
1578	63	26	42	1620	80	36	91
1579	60	26	44	1621	94	21	67
1580	57	25	30	1622	86	26	76
1581	64	19	31	1623	62	30	123
1582	64	27	51	1624	92	23	94
1583	55	32	62	1625	68	25	93
1584	62	38	95	1626	77	30	87
1585	45	25	67	1627	66	36	82
1586	67	20	72	1628	103	17	62
1587	65	34	206	1629	88	31	71
1588	64	33	97	1630	80	41	121
1589	77	27	74	1631	79	32	120
1590	78	32	147	1632	115	25	95
1591	53	40	158	1633	104	31	97
1592	83	33	177	1634	109	25	110
1593	79	33	95	1635	123	23	114
1594	63	44	67	1636	114	24	84
1595	96	26	108	1637	123	37	121
1596	92	18	102	1638	107	28	248
1597	64	18	99	1639	82	33	169
1598	98	23	108	1640	95	40	129
1599	86	26	96	1641	124	32	124
1600	78	22	73	1642	120	34	128
1601	89	37	64	1643	151	19	106
1602	82	32	107	1644	99	34	121
1603	96	32	64	1645	115	26	73
1604	67	35	98	1646	99	48	76
1605	83	41	119	1647	116	36	77
1606	76	26	94	1648	89	35	101
1607	88	34	82	1649	116	37	81
1608	94	30	84	1650	103	33	135
1609	86	25	101	1651	143	37	127
1610	90	31	119	1652	125	*6	182
1611	96	32	108	1653	130	42	78
1612	86	17	114	1654	110	48	140
1613	83	26	95	1655	127	49	115
1614	77	24	89	1656	129	14	148
1615	63	21	128	1657	99	33	193

* The marriage ceremony, during the commonwealth, was often performed by a justice of the peace.

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Year.	Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials	Year.	Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials
1658	67	17	182	1700	141	32	127
1659	121	26	180	1701	121	29	137
1660	136	17	100	1702	136	32	158
1661	118	22	136	1703	138	36	152
1662	123	21	135	1704	97	37	214
1663	114	36	142	1705	131	40	170
1664	153	22	200	1706	120	49	166
1665	113	31	118	1707	134	49	176
1666	132	21	187	1708	146	65	195
1667	116	21	181	1709	137	43	133
1668	109	22	179	1710	121	54	118
1669	116	19	226	1711	132	43	150
1670	121	36	181	1712	128	47	111
1671	116	34	178	1713	144	48	121
1672	143	28	196	1714	145	48	138
1673	146	20	127	1715	151	46	134
1674	116	34	102	1716	150	45	150
1675	138	18	119	1717	185	45	139
1676	125	20	152	1718	130	28	202
1677	132	26	162	1719	145	39	270
1678	117	24	168	1720	135	51	272
1679	84	37	170	1721	133	70	152
1680	111	23	207	1722	169	54	181
1681	96	22	143	1723	181	55	184
1682	112	28	149	1724	169	46	196
1683	110	29	102	1725	156	49	178
1684	116	22	107	1726	163	43	160
1685	85	31	95	1727	148	48	309*
1686	133	37	142	1728	126	69	207
1687	91	56	119	1729	139	60	158
1688	94	21	113	1730	126	46	168
1689	80	31	117	1731	152	56	150
1690	83	22	103	1732	164	38	179
1691	121	11	180	1733	144	50	151
1692	89	33	123	1734	134	37	157
1693	106	26	165	1735	147	37	147
1694	81	34	118	1736	142	32	222
1695	114	35	144	1737	124	30	198
1696	107	26	134	1738	120	40	150
1697	129	31	102	1739	126	25	130
1698	135	22	101	1740	131	35	168
1699	128	25	132	1741	106	61	201

* In this year the very large number of 309 were buried: this great mortality is not acccounted for.

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Year.	bap-tisms.	Mar-riages.	Burials	Year.	Bap-tisms.	Mar-riages.	Burials
1742	101	41	135	1785	142	40	79
1743	113	38	136	1786	121	40	143
1744	94	37	115	1787	119	59	108
1745	110	26	125	1788	145	62	140
1746	111	27	117	1789	156	53	131
1747	97	45	183	1790	161	55	142
1748	98	33	156	1791	161	57	135
1749	92	26	131	1792	167	58	127
1750	106	36	93	1793	168	55	183
1751	72	38	112	1794	178	52	133
1752	112	36	119	1795	137	41	153
1753	103	23	89	1796	148	36	160
1754	67	33	103	1797	146	78	134
1755	121	38	154	1798	169	59	164
1756	104	41	182	1799	150	57	122
1757	107	22	160	1800	159	60	140
1758	114	29	119	1801	171	32	236
1759	115	27	140	1802	150	64	182
1760	125	42	101	1803	184	56	144
1761	102	41	107	1804	188	65	138
1762	125	34	153	1805	162	37	115
1763	102	48	183	1806	161	69	105
1764	123	48	185	1807	168	53	159
1765	133	41	94	1808	153	59	174
1766	144	39	102	1809	139	55	163
1767	122	41	190	1810	156	57	183
1768	126	34	158	1811	158	55	130
1769	145	43	127	1812	168	60	110
1770	151	35	109	1813	168	60	83
1771	124	38	132	1814	188	63	117
1772	134	53	124	1815	185	57	139
1773	118	43	149	1816	174	58	87
1774	139	35	112	1817	203	57	155
1775	120	40	114	1818	176	66	129
1776	152	19	98	1819	206	66	131
1777	130	45	101	1820	193	69	111
1778	125	42	186	1821	201	60	133
1779	96	38	188	1822	245	57	176
1780	93	37	200	1823	211	80	176
1781	92	43	186	1824	311	79	147
1782	119	49	176	1825	245	72	145
1783	115	50	181	1826	209	53	147
1784	114	54	178				

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In the year 1610, is a remarkable entry amongst the baptisms, of which the following is a translation:

"2d January 1610. Prudence, the wife of William "Holliday, a woman remarkably small, brought forth "four children at a birth, three males and one female, "perfect in all their features, of whom two as soon as born "expired, having quickly measured their course of this "life, and were committed to christian burial; two, "being brought for baptism, are bound in the sacrament "of regeneration, namely, Robert the son, and Elizabeth "the daughter of William Holliday, and washed by "solemn rite in the sacred font."

It is observed, that there are annually more in proportion born than die, so that if there die ten, we may for the most part reckon that there are twelve born. By the above register, however, it appears that from 1558 to 1788, (230 years) there were more burials than baptisms, and from that period to 1825, (37 years) there were more baptisms than burials. To what is the late excess of births over burials to be attributed, when formerly the reverse was generally the case?

The greatest number of baptisms, marriages, and burials in any one year appears to have been as under:

Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials.
A.D.	A.D.	A.D.
In 16th cent. 1598 98	In 1594 .. 44	In 1587 .. 206
17th cent. 1664 153	1687 ... 56	1538 .. 248
18th cent. 1717 185	1797 .. 78	1727 .. 309

In each of the following years—1587, 1638, 1669, 1680, 1704, 1718, 1719, 1720, 1728, 1736, 1741, 1801, the burials exceeded the number of two hundred.

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The next object of ancient note within the town is the construction of

THE BRIDGE

over the great river. It has been found impracticable to ascertain at what period a bridge was first built at Wisbech. The town appears from very remote times to have stood part on one side, and part on the other side of the river; whence it is reasonable to infer that a more convenient mode of communication than a ferry would be early established. And that such a mode of communication did in fact exist some years prior to the commencement of the fourteenth century is indisputable, inasmuch as mention is made of the ruinous state of the bridge at Wisbech in the first year of Edward III. when John Hotham,* bishop of Ely, obtained a grant of a custom A.D. 1326.

* Extract from the records of the court of chancery, preserved in the tower of London, 5th Edward, after the conquest, John Hotham, then bishop:

De pontagio episcopo Eliensi concesso. Rex venerabili in Christo patri Johanni eadem gratia Eliensi episcopo saltm Scatis quod ad requisitionem vestram in auxilium pontis ville vestræ de Wysbeche qui dirutus est et confractus ut accepimus reparand et emendand concessimus vobis quod a vicesimo sexto die Aprilis proxime futuri usque ad finem trium annorum tunc proximi sequentium plenar complet capiatis per manus illorum de quibus confiditis de rebus venalibus ad eandem

Of pontage granted to the bishop of Ely. The King to the right rev. father in Christ, John, by the same grace bishop of Ely greeting: Know ye, that at your request, in aid of amending and repairing the bridge of your town of Wysebeche, which is decayed and broken, as we are informed, we have granted to you, that from the 26th April next ensuing, to the end of three years then next following, to be fully completed, ye take by the hands of those in whom ye confide, of things for sale

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or tax on all saleable goods going into the town of Wisbech, such as horses, hay, corn, &c. for the space of three years, which custom or tax was declared to be so specially granted for the purpose of doing reparation to the bridge of Wisbech, at that time ruinous. About one
A.D. hundred years after this period, all who had lands in the
1426. Old Market were on an inquisition ordered to contribute to the repairs of the bridge. It is evident, by examining various documents and inquisitions taken for seventy or eighty years afterwards before the commissioners of sewers, wherein Wisbech high bridge is repeatedly mentioned, that at some time the lord bishop of Ely, and the landholders of the north side of the river of Wisbech, and the township there; and at other times the bishop of Ely, and the inhabitants and landholders within the hundred of Wisbech, were considered liable to the
1533. repairs. In the year 1533, an inquisition was taken before the commissioners of sewers as follows: "That "the great brigge of Wysbiche, called the High Brigge, "is in decay for lack of making of the pavement, and "also that the south east pier is likely to fall into the "river, and that it ought to be made by the bishop of

villam sive ad forum ejusdem villæ venientibus consuetudines subscriptas viz. &c. Et idio vobis mandamus quod predictas consuetudines usq at finem annorum predictorum capiatis sicut predictum est completis autem annis predictis dictæ consuetudines penitus cessent et desinant In cujus &c.

coming to the town, or to the market of the said town, the customs following, that is to say, &c. and therefore, we command you that ye take the aforesaid customs to the end of the years aforesaid, as is above mentioned; but the said years being completed, let the said customs cease and be at an end. In witness, &c.

P ipsum Regem et Consilium — *By the King and Counsel.*

This document was furnished to the compiler by Steed Girdlestone, esq.

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" Ely, and the landholders of the north side of the river " of Wysbiche, and the township there."

At another time presentment was made, " that the A.D.
" great brigge of the towne of Wysbiche was in decay, 1571.
" wherefore we will that it be sufficiently repaired and
" amended by the lord bishop of Ely, and all the whole
" inhabitants and landholders within the hundred of
" Wysbiche, viz. the lord bishop for one part, and all
" the aforesaid townships for two parts,—every town
" according to the rate of their tenure." In the proceedings of the body corporate of Wisbech, dated 9th September 1583, an order is made, " that the carpenters 1583.
" and laborers should begin to work upon the great
" bridge of Wysbiche;" and in January following, there was an agreement that the collectors of the bridge should gather the fourth of the sum assessed on every person within the town of Wisbech, for the sum of £7. 16*s*. of them to be gathered and collected of the inhabitants, the assessment for the building thereof, the whole charge whereof was £51. 4*s*. 10*d*. of which the queen's part was assessed at £33. 8*s*. and but £30. being paid, there was to be distrained for the queen's part £3. 8*s*. The commissioners of sewers resolved, in 1586.
this year, that the bishop of Ely should defray one third part of the expense of keeping the bridge in repair. After the incorporation of the burgesses, the town of Wisbech 1612.
was indicted for not repairing the bridge, which indictment the burgesses traversed at the expense of the town. At the same time the inhabitants took some pains in searching the tower records, but the result is not stated. At length a bridge was ordered to be built, and the justices appointed a treasurer for receiving all the monies to be levied within the

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hundred of Wisbech, "for the new making of the great "bridge," and a rate of £90. was laid upon the town. Some difficulty afterwards arose as to the fencing of the end thereof, when it was declared that it should be at the *charge of the hundred*, which, it was conceived, ought to do it. The bridge then erected was of wood, and on its being stated that a brick wall would be necessary at the foot, the corporation took that charge upon themselves, together with the assessment made, with an understanding "that it should be no precedent "in future, but that Elm and the towns of Well * should "contribute to maintaining the bridge as formerly." When the bridge again began to go to ruin, an order
A.D. of sessions was made "that the bridge being in decay,
1637. "the inhabitants of the hundred of Wisbech were and "ought to repair the same," and the justices made a rate according to the ancient manner of ratage, for the speedy repairing of the bridge, and appointing surveyors for the work, with a treasurer to receive the monies assessed. Doubts, however, still existing as to the liability of the parties actually bound to repair, an indictment was directed to be preferred against the hundred, and counsel were retained accordingly to try the question at the assizes. The event, however, is as before neglected to be recorded, though a resolution of the body corporate is entered into, in order to prevent any process for levying issues on the town, as to the repairs; which is followed up by another order to provide timber to repair, "on behalf of the bishop of Ely, the "country, and the burgesses." There are several orders

* Among the ancient records in the lord bishop's registry is an entry as follows: "That the men of Wells were bound to furnish five boats "to transport the bishop and his suite from Wisbech; and if the five "boats were not sufficient, that the men of Wisbech were to supply the "residue necessary."

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on the corporation books after this period, directing workmen to repair, and agreeing with others for the bridge being kept in repair, for seven years, at a certain annual sum; and in 1651, one hundred pounds were paid by the corporation towards building the bridge over the great river. In the year 1729, a petition of the justices of the peace, merchants, land-owners, and chief inhabitants of Wisbech, was presented to the house of commons, setting forth that the roads from Tid Gote to Wisbech, and thence to Guyhirn ferry, on the south side of Wisbech river, were very much out of repair, and almost impassable, being a very great road for waggons, beast, and sheep to London, which were obliged to go over *Wisbech bridge*, which roads and bridge had been a great and continual charge to the neighbourhood, and praying, amongst other things, that power might be granted to impose a reasonable toll for the effectual repair of the said roads, as well as Wisbech bridge.* This petition was not productive of any beneficial result, either as to the future support of the bridge, or amendment of the roads at that period. The progress of time naturally led to the decay of the frail materials of which the ancient structure was composed, which becoming at length in a most ruinous condition, it was resolved, on a view being taken by the corporation, by whom its insecure state was admitted, that it would be impracticable to proceed with the restoration of the old bridge to any effect, but that it would be desirable to erect one of more durable materials, so that it was determined to take the old erection down, and build a new one of stone. The same was agreed to be of one arch, if practicable, and to be in the situation where the

A. D.
1651. 1729. 1756.

* Coles' MSS.

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A.D. old bridge then stood, if it could be done without pre-
1757. judice to the navigation. A plan was drawn and laid before the town hall, and the burgesses at large were called upon to meet in common hall, and to assent to or dissent from borrowing money by the capital burgesses upon their lands and tenements, towards defraying the expenses of building the said bridge, which was then determined upon, and £1200. were ordered to be borrowed on the corporation revenues. A plan and elevation were now delivered in, which were submitted to Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Burrough, master of Caius College, Cambridge, touching the strength and width thereof, with a request for his opinion, whether the arch were of such curvature as would be likely to stand and answer the purpose of a bridge; who approving thereof, a contract was entered into for £1750. and the materials of the old bridge. A ferry and floating bridge were provided, with a horse boat to ply from the
1758. White Hart inn, on the north brink, the corporation having regulated the fares. The work then commenced, and the first stone was laid, with an inscription engraved on a plate as follows:

Ex Ligneo
Surrexit Lapideus
A.D. 1758.
Esto perpetuus.

In the progress of the work, the estimate was found insufficient, and upon a meeting of the burgesses, to consider the propriety of borrowing £500. more, it was unanimously agreed to. The work then proceeded with
1759. spirit, and was satisfactorily completed. The bridge thus erected is worthy of admiration. It forms a handsome

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elliptical arch of seventy-two feet span. The principal objection lies to the width, the space within the balustrades being so confined as not to allow two carriages to pass at the same time. This inconvenience is felt and acknowledged by all, and might be remedied, in which case the bridge would become admired, as much for its convenience as it is now for its elegance. But all partial meliorations are now suspended, on account of the important works in contemplation, in regard to the improvement of the river and the passage of the waters through the town, which may probably render it necessary to remove the bridge itself, and erect another of larger dimensions. The present stone bridge having by time and accidents fallen into decay, the liability of repair again became a question, whether the isle of Ely or the body corporate was the responsible party. And for the purpose of bringing the question to a final issue, not only for the present but future repairs, an indictment was preferred at Cambridge Lammas assizes, 1813, against the inhabitants of the isle, and, on trial before a jury there, it was determined by the court, that the repairs done by the corporation from time to time discharged the said inhabitants, and fixed the burthen on the corporation for ever; for that if that body were not originally liable, they had furnished evidence against themselves, so as to make them now liable, unless stronger evidence could be adduced to fix the expense on the isle at large. A.D. 1813.

THE GUILD HALL.

Whilst the guild or fraternity of the holy trinity exercised its authority in the town, the members held their meetings at a public hall or room, the description of which is so uncertain, that it is difficult now to

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A.D. discover where it was actually situated. Amongst
1379. the first proceedings of the guild, a sum of money is mentioned to be paid for ornamenting the hall, and in
1473. 1473, the guild gave orders for the purchasing of two hundred reed for the repair of their hall, which, though it does not convey any idea of a magnificent building,
1477. still accords with the simplicity of early times. In 1477, Thomas Barker is stated to appear before the vicar, and other co-fraters, in the *guild hall* of the holy trinity, to
1524. grant certain alms in perpetuity. In the year 1524, every brother and sister were ordered to give their attendance, and come to the "guild hall" every year, and to go with the alderman from the said hall to the church.
1549. When king Edward VI. granted his charter, he directed that the inhabitants should meet at a certain house in the town called the "common hall." And at the time the possessions of the guild fell into the hands of the king, one William Bellman is stated to have built an elleemosinary
1583. house, called in modern language a guild hall. In 1583, an entry is recorded "concerning the house to be "furnished for the meeting of the ten men," which it is conjectured was the house given by William Bellman, and appropriated for the purpose of a town hall, wherein the body corporate should hold their public meetings.
1586. Very shortly after, viz. in 1586, the town was divided into ten wards, with a particular description of each, in one of which it is shewn clearly that the town hall was
1651. situated in "Shippe Lane,"* and about sixty-five years after this period, John Crane, Esq.† gave £100. for

* This old town hall and grammar school in Ship Lane are now intended to be entirely pulled down, and the ground thrown open for a public road. See further, 'Grammar School' (next chapter.)

† See Crane's will, dated 26th June 1651, amongst the 'Public 'Charities.'

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making additions to the hall, wherein the capital burgesses met to transact their public business, which donation is well known by documents to have been expended in the erecting of an additional room at the back of the old grammar school, on the north side of Ship Lane, which continued to be used as the common hall for all public purposes until the year 1810, when it being found inconvenient in many respects, the capital burgesses resolved to set apart the large room in the building then recently erected by them under the same roof as the custom house, (and built at the expense of the capital burgesses) to be used in future for the purposes of all their public meetings, and to be called the "new town hall;" and the town arms, which are the cross keys, (the emblem of St. Peter) and the painting of Edward VI. were removed from the old hall, and placed in the new one, together with the portrait of the Rev. Dr. Jobson. A.D. 1810.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Is upon the same site whereon the old town hall stands, on the north side of Ship Lane, in the front thereof, but the original erection and appropriation, both of the building for the school and the master's house, are enveloped in the same mystery as the guild hall. It is not improbable that it was the gift of William Bellman, about 1549. The guild of the holy trinity is before shown to have been founded in 2d Richard II. and confirmed by him in the twentieth year of his reign, for several religious purposes, and, amongst other things, for a free school there, "to educate and bring up youths." The first time the name of the schoolmaster appears 1379.

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A.D. in the corporation records is in 1506, when an order was
1506. made that "the schoolmaster should have eight marks "sterling for his wages," plainly indicating that the appointment was not recent, and indeed in Coles' MSS. the name of "Jacob Cresner" is found as master in 1446. The inhabitants of Wisbech availed themselves of the foundation of this school, in their solicitation for a re-grant of the possessions of the guild of the holy trinity at the time of its dissolution. And it is provided by the charter of Edward VI., that there should be a school or permanent place of learning in the town, for the instruction of boys and young men in grammatical knowledge and polite learning, *as in the said town had theretofore been accustomed*; and that there should be thenceforward supported there for ever, a schoolmaster, learned in the Latin and Greek languages, and imbued with virtuous morals, to instruct such youths; and that the master should have for his salary and stipend annually of the burgesses, £12. The capital burgesses were also empowered to nominate and appoint the schoolmaster, with the approbation of any other ten burgesses, as often as the mastership should become vacant. And the bishop of Ely for the time being has the "visitation, "reformation, and correction," as well of the schoolmaster, as of the school, and on the quadrennial visitations of his lordship in this deanery, the senior boy of the school delivers a Latin oration in his lordship's presence.

1628. In 1628, Thomas Parke, esq. left, by his will, twenty-eight acres of land in Elm. Four acres of land in Wisbech were allotted to the school from the common of Crabb marsh; and John Crane, esq. in 1651, left a further addition "to amend the schoolmaster's wages," by giving him a moiety of the rents of the Black Bull

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estate,* which was vested in the capital burgesses for that purpose, and which moiety produced at the time £20. per annum, and it is still paid by them, although the premises were sold in the year 1801, under the act for redemption of the land tax. Mr. Parke also founded four bye fellowships of £16. per annum each, at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and four scholarships of £10. per annum each. For this purpose, lands and tenements in Wisbech, Leverington, Guyhirn, and Elm, were conveyed to the college. The heirs of Mr. Parke were to nominate the fellows alternately with the college; but it does not appear that there is any preference reserved for the inhabitants of Wisbech, as to the appointments to either of these foundations. In 1638, Mr. William Holmes, of the city of Exeter, directed by deed £400. to be laid out in the purchase of lands, partly for the poor, and partly for two scholars at St. Mary Magdalen college, Cambridge; afterwards, by his will dated 2d April 1656, he directed that the land purchased with this money should be appropriated to the scholars only. Lands in Holbeach, in the county of Lincoln, were bought with this bequest, which are now let for £60. per annum. In addition to this real property, the scholarship fund in the three per cent. consols amounts to £2200. 3*s.* 2*d.* stock, besides cash in the accountant general's hands for an unapplied balance of £160. 1*s.* 10*d.* after the recent purchase of £166. 19*s.* stock. These sums are the produce of savings which have been made when the scholarships were not full. The scholarships are, therefore, at this time worth

A.D. 1638.

* Now called the New Inn.

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	£.	s.	d.
For rent	60	0	0
Interest of £2200. 3*s.* 2*d.* stock	66	0	0
Ditto of £166. 19*s.* further stock	5	0	6
Unapplied balance of £160. 1*s.* 10*d.* at four per cent.	9	8	7
	£140	9	1

Or £70. 4*s.* 6*d.* each. The result of a chancery suit about sixty years since placed those funds in the hands of the accountant general of that court. The scholarships are tenable only by boys born in the town of Wisbech, and educated for at least three years in this school. The appointment to them rests with the capital burgesses and the master jointly. The Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, M.A. held the office of head master for a period of twenty-three years, with the highest honour and integrity, in the instruction of others in knowledge and virtue; and upon his resignation at Michaelmas 1826, the capital burgesses elected * the Rev. J. R. Major,

* On a former vacancy, occasioned by the death of the head master in 1794, several candidates offered themselves for the appointment, when the following letter was addressed to the then town bailiff, in consequence of a droll mistake in the advertisement:

"Gentlemen,

"Having been informed that a vacancy had taken place "for the mastership of the free grammar school of Wisbech, I proposed "myself a candidate, and inclosed you testimonials of my qualifications by "last post, but observing by an advertisement in the General Evening Post, "(which I herewith send you) that you intend proceeding to the *execution*

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of Trinity college, Cambridge, to succeed him, a gentleman who stands very eminent for learning, and whose testimonials gave abundant proof of his moral worth, good deportment, and qualification for such an appointment. The school is open to the boys resident in the town for classical instruction, free of expense. There is no restriction as to the age of admission, or the time of superannuation. On the late recent appointment, the corporate body made some alterations, which were considered as more beneficial to the master. The regular stipend is about £ 100. per annum ; but the corporation proposed, that in addition they would pay the rates and taxes for the school house and premises, and allow the master for teaching a number of boys, not exceeding twenty, to be nominated by the corporation, in the English language, and in writing and arithmetic, at the rate of twelve shillings per quarter for each. Boys, being sons of inhabitants of the town, are still to be educated in the Greek and Latin tongues gratuitously. The master is to be at liberty to instruct in the English language, writing and arithmetic, boys not included in the corporation list, and to receive any others as boarders or day scholars upon his own terms. The master of the school is also paid eight guineas per annum for accommodating the chief justice of the isle during the assizes with lodgings, but

" of the master on the 11th January next, I decline being a candidate, " and beg leave to inform you, that I do not feel myself quite prepared " *for the honour of martyrdom.*

" I am, gentlemen,

" Your most obedient, humble servant,

" J. Burly."

" To the Capital Burgesses of Wisbech."

The word '*execution*' was of course used instead of 'election.'

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this payment is not made to the master as such, nor has it any connexion with the emoluments of his office. The dwelling house which the master has heretofore enjoyed with the school is at this time in so dilapidated a state, as scarcely to be fit for the reception of a family and pupils. Upon the recent vacancy, the corporation directed the buildings to be surveyed, when they were reported to be in so ruinous a condition, that it would be an useless expenditure of money to attempt to put them in decent repair; it therefore became a question, whether if another house and school were to be erected, the old site should not be abandoned altogether, it being suggested, that if the structure now standing were pulled down, and the space thrown open to form a new approach to the market place, direct from the Lynn road, it would constitute a most important improvement. The town bailiff,* therefore, called a meeting of the capital and other burgesses and inhabitants of the town, to consider upon a plan for remedying the inconveniences complained of, either by repairing or rebuilding the present erections or otherwise, when it was resolved, at a numerous meeting of the inhabitants held on the 13th November 1826, that, considering the dilapidated condition of the school house, and the great charge of putting it into a perfect state of repair, it would be expedient not only to rebuild the house and school, but that it would be desirable to provide a more extensive and commodious site for the same, and to throw open the present premises, or a sufficient part thereof, as a public road from the

* William Orton, esq.

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market place across the old horse fair and canal, to the Lynn road; and that a part of the premises at the end of the proposed new road, at the entrance from Lynn, would form a convenient situation for a new house and school. To effect all which improvements, it was estimated that the sum of £4000. would be required, and as the corporation funds were stated to be inadequate at this time to meet the charges contemplated, it became necessary to raise such sum by loan, and the inhabitants of the town were invited to lend monies to the corporation for such purpose, in shares of £50. each; and upon a subscription being forthwith opened, £3000. was quickly advanced, and the remaining sum to make up the £4000. was soon raised. There is no second master upon the foundation. Among the distinguished characters who have been educated at this school, may be enumerated

Thomas Herring, D.D. Archbishop of Canterbury.
The Hon. Charles Dalrymple Lindsay, son of the earl of Balcarras, now bishop of Kildare, and brother in law to the Rt. Hon. the earl of Hardwicke.
General Sir Charles Wale, K.C.B., Thetford.
Colonel Alexander Malcolm, (an officer of distinction) now dead.
Thomas Clarkson, esq. of Bury, (the well known strenuous asserter of the abolition of slavery.)

The following names of the masters of the grammar school remain on record:

A.D.		A.D.	
1446	Jacob Cresner,*	1580	Thomas Lowthe,
1548	Henry Ogle,	——	John Power,
1564	Mr. Rastall,	1630	William Frisney,

* Coles' MSS.

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A.D.		A.D.	
1669	George Frisney,	1749	John Clarkson, Clerk,*
1078	Francis Fern, M. A.	1766	Richard Oswin, Clerk,
1690	Thomas Johnson, M.A.	1796	Martin Coulcher, Clerk,†
1697	Thomas Carter, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.	1803	Jeremiah Jackson, M.A. of St. John's College, Cambridge,
1727	John Newson, Clerk,	1826	J. R. Major, M. A. of Trinity College, Cambridge.
1731	Richard Foster, Clerk,		

THE GAOL.

Whilst the ancient castle was kept up as a fortress, some part thereof within the walls was allotted for the use of a prison; and it is shewn that assizes were held in the mote hall, and the governor of the castle was answerable for the safety of the prisoners committed to the gaol there. Sir Andrew Ogard, in 1452, and Sir James Hobard, in 1494, were each fined £5. for the escape of felons.‡ A further proof also of the antiquity of a prison's having been maintained in this town is, that the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ely, the lord of the franchise, in his appointment of "the chief bailiff "for the isle of Ely," grants to the chief bailiff two several patents, for the custody not only of the gaol of the said bishop, in the city of Ely, within his barton there, but also of the prison and gaol of Wisbech, and the prisoners there imprisoned, and to be thereafter imprisoned, &c. which form has been used and continued for time immemorial. Upon dismantling the castle,

* The father of Thomas Clarkson, esq. before mentioned.

† On the election of this gentleman, there was an equality of votes, when the capital burgesses drew lots, which was done by the clerk.

‡ The gaoler's stipend then was 1s. 6d. per week.

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it is probable the prison fell into decay, and as a gaol was supported by the lord of the franchise at his sole charge at Ely, such one gaol might then be thought sufficient for the purpose of confinement of the several offenders within the whole isle. As the population of Wisbech increased, a convenience would be found in providing a place of safe custody for misdemeanants, to save the expense of conveying prisoners to Ely on every slight offence. The capital burgesses, therefore, as guardians of the town, appear for some time to have set apart two tenements to be used for the purpose of a house of correction, for which they received eight pounds per annum. In the year 1602, an account is stated of monies paid by the corporation for relief of prisoners. In 1616, twelve thousand bricks * were ordered to be bought by the corporation to repair the house of correction, and four years afterwards, the capital burgesses agreed to lend a house for the accommodation of a house of correction. In 1680, a formal question arose concerning the right to the maintaining of the house used as a gaol, when a petition was drawn up by the capital burgesses and inhabitants, which was referred to the judge of assize, and by him directed to be submitted to several justices, and they doing nothing therein, it was again ordered to be referred to the judge. No determination is recorded, but two years after, the corporation ordered that the wall of the gaol yard should be rebuilt for the benefit of the prisoners, and a yard inclosed for airing them, and that the rent of the gaol should not be less than £ 14.† The last notice

A.D. 1602. 1616. 1680.

* At fifteen shillings and eight pence per thousand.

† By this it appears that the isle of Ely paid the rent, although the corporation provided the convenience.

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A.D. by the capital burgesses, relative to the house of cor-
1757. rection, is in the year 1757, when at a full hall, an inquiry was ordered to be instituted into the right of the burgesses to the gaol, and that after examining all evidences, they should lay the same before the magistrates of the hundred of Wisbech and the north part of Witchford, in order to prove the burgesses' right to the same, and the town bailiff was ordered to call in such assistance as he should think proper. The issue, however, is (as in various other cases) omitted to be stated, though it is probable the burgesses could not establish any such right. A building, used as a house of correction, had for a considerable length of time been continued under the direction of the magistrates of the hundred of Wisbech and north part of Witchford, which becoming in a very ruinous state, and unfit for the safe custody of prisoners, the magistrates for the
1807. isle resolved to take down the same, in the year 1807, and a new one was erected *on the old site*, taking in, by way of addition, a portion of ground contiguous, whereon four almshouses, called "Sturmyn's," formerly stood,* on the south side of the great river, and the expense of rebuilding was defrayed out of the county rates for the isle. This building is well calculated to answer the purposes for which it was designed. It contains six wards for female prisoners, and eleven for males, besides two for debtors. It has a chapel, to which a chaplain, with a salary of £50. per annum, is appointed by the magistrates, where divine service is performed every sunday. There is a good yard for airing the prisoners, with a rain water cistern, pump, &c. The most recent alteration in this prison is the erection

* See title 'Almshouses,' Mr. Sturmyn's.

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of a tread mill, affording at once to the prisoners both labour and punishment. This machine is capable of employing eleven men at a time, with an adjoining corn mill and bakehouse, and a small store house or granary above. The men only are employed on the tread wheel, and the changes of relays take place at the ringing of a bell, at intervals of not less than ten or fifteen minutes. The present diet is bread and water, with the occasional indulgence of a little animal food supplied by the friends of the prisoners. The cost of the mill in its building and machinery was £600. The force is employed to grind corn for the public. Samuel Craddock is at this time the very respectable keeper of the house of correction.

THE SHIRE HALL,

erected in the year 1807, is situated on the south brink of the river, to which the house of correction last described is annexed. The exterior does not manifest much taste, though a considerable sum of money was expended thereon; but the hall itself is allowed to be very convenient for the transaction of business, and by a passage from the prison communicating with the court, the unfortunate objects, who are to appear before that tribunal, are brought forward without being unnecessarily exposed to the gaze of the public. The old shire hall, which was taken down in 1810, stood at the upper or eastern end of the new market place.

THE MARKET PLACE

is on the south side of the river, in the form of a parallelogram, open and spacious,—in width about ninety-four feet, and in length three hundred and eighty feet,—

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paved with Yorkshire slabs in rows, intermixed with large cobbles, so that on the market day, when the stalls are set up upon that part which is paved with cobbles, the portion, composed of slabs, (about three hundred and ten feet in length and thirty-seven in width) becomes reserved as an open space for all whose business leads them to the market, affording a convenient paved walk to view the several articles exposed on each side for sale. The whole was completed in the year 1811, at the expense of £1,170.; £300. of which was paid by the consent of the inhabitants out of the highway rates, and the rest by the corporation. The market day is Saturday.* There is another open space on the north side of the river, called the Old Market, which, if ever used as a general market place, was deserted at a very early period. In the latter place, used formerly to be a pond, which is known to have continued until about 1669, when it was ordered to be cleaned out, and in the course of the following ten years, the same was directed to be filled, and a pump was set down, which appears by the corporation records to have taken place on the 2d March 1679. Towns, we know, were always the dependants of castles; and in early troublesome times, people were glad to seek protection under the walls of a fortress, and it is not improbable, that for the sake of

* The market day of the ancient Britons was Wednesday, from its dedication to Mercury; but the Anglo-Saxons kept their markets on a Sunday, (as is even now the custom in the Roman catholic countries) to give the people an opportunity of assembling to perform their religious duties, and to purchase the necessaries of life. The prejudicial effects of this mixture of religious with secular affairs soon produced a law, forfeiting all goods exposed to sale on that day, and appointing *Saturday* for that purpose. Fairs and markets used formerly to be kept in church yards, which practice was forbidden by statute 13th Edward I. c. vi. A. D. 1294.

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contiguity to the castle, the space on the south side would be selected as more convenient, as well as secure for the inhabitants, in the negotiation of their public affairs; for although this space bears the name of the New Market, it has been so designated for very many centuries; for in 1436, we read that on an inquisition, it was presented, "that all who held land in the old "market of Wisbech should contribute to the repairs "of the bridge;" a tacit proof that a new market place then existed. In fact, the whole space from the bridge to the present market place was called the new market, and old title deeds describe all the property from the bridge to the church to be abutting on the new market, without any distinction of the High Street, or any other place. A deed of conveyance, of the date of 17th August 1461, is now extant, of a certain messuage called the Swan,* and lying in the new market place of Wisbech, and abutting upon the bank of Wisbech on the west, and the common street east.

A.D. 1436. 1471.

Ragstone was formerly much used for paving, and particularly in London, it being dug in the vicinity of Maidstone, in Kent. In 1549, we find a sum of money was expended for the paving of this market place with ragstone, which appears afterwards to have been taken up, for in 1570, the market place was raised by soil brought from the river bank between Crabbe Marsh gate and Elm Leam, by the consent of bishop Goodericke.† A certain building used for butchers' shambles was erected in 1592, by the capital burgesses, at the upper or eastern end of the new market place, adjoining whereto was built the old shire hall, both of which were removed in the year 1810, by virtue of the act

1549. 1570. 1592.

* This is supposed to be the Rose and Crown inn. † See page 36.

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then obtained for improving the town; thereby affording
A.D. increased accommodation for the public market. In
1665. 1665, an order appears on the corporation books for again paving this market place. Originally there was a market cross,* of which the reparation is mentioned in 1549.† Such erections were common, and generally raised on high steps, the lowermost serving as a bench to those who served the market with the produce of the neighbouring country. This cross was afterwards changed to an obelisk, which continued standing at the western end of the market place, until taken down at the time when the shambles were removed, and the space for the market laid out in the present form. A market is mentioned as early as the year 1332. The capital burgesses hold the fairs and markets by lease from the lord bishop of Ely, and pay an annual fee farm rent of £5. 6s. 3d. for the same. King Edward I. in the first year of his reign, (1327) granted a charter for a fair at Wisbech, to be holden for twenty successive days.‡ The tolls of the market are now let for £136. per annum. In the year 1810, a fish-market was erected near to the custom house, and contiguous to the river.

THE CORN EXCHANGE.

1616. A seed or corn market was built in the year 1616, near to the river, on the south-east side of the bridge, about the spot on the quay where the crane for landing goods from vessels in the river now stands, which being removed in the year 1785, the present neat and orna-

* Fosbroke observes that market crosses were originally designed to check a worldly spirit, and intended to inculcate upright intention and fairness of dealing. Vol, i. p. 109.

† See page 189. ‡ See page 138.

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mental building was, in the year 1811, erected on the north side of the river, opposite to the bridge, for the purpose of a corn exchange, having an area of sixty feet, surrounded with appropriate boxes for the use of the merchants in the negociation of their business. It was built at the charge of the capital burgesses, upon part of the site of premises formerly called the Nag's Head inn, which were purchased by the corporation for the public benefit. Over the ground plot of the building are two commodious rooms now hired of the corporation; the one used as a

NEWS ROOM,

where four daily public papers are taken in, and three provincial weekly papers, the expense whereof is defrayed by subscription amongst the members; the other used as a

BILLIARD ROOM,

the subscription whereto is amongst private individuals, and no betting permitted.

THE CATTLE MARKET

is well adapted by its situation for that purpose. The residue of the ground or yard so purchased by the corporation, heretofore belonging to the Nag's Head inn, at the back of the corn exchange, abutting upon Pickard's Lane, was appropriated by them, and fitted up for such market. Those who recollect the great inconvenience existing to all persons using the market, when it was held in the public streets of the town, will

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freely acknowledge the present accommodation. This improvement has not taken place more than sixteen years, and it is already found that much larger space is required for the increasing stock brought to the town. The tolls at present bring in a revenue to the corporation of £260. per annum, including the standings for the corn exchange. The corn exchange, with its appendages, and the markets, were all built and formed in the year 1811.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE

was erected in the year 1801 by the capital burgesses, on the site of the building where anciently stood the firkin cross for the sale of butter, of which article great quantities were formerly sent from this town.* This building presents nothing, either externally or internally, deserving of peculiar notice: it is under the same roof as the new town hall; such part thereof as is not used by the capital burgessess for their public purposes being leased by them to his majesty's commissioners of the customs, who now hold an existing lease for a term of
A.D. twenty-one years from the 25th March 1823, at £35.
1722. per annum.† In the year 1722, the building then used as a custom houee was broken open and robbed; the depredators, however, did not escape undiscovered, but were prosecuted to conviction. The custom house has

* 8,000 firkins of butter have been exported in one year to London.

† The commissioners of customs, in former times, used to hire some convenient dwelling in the town, for the purposes of the collector and other officers, until the year 1740, when Mr. Cobb, the collector, being town-bailiff, the capital burgesses then first agreed to provide an accommodation for the collector, to be used as a custom house, at £12. per annum, being the same rent which had been theretofore accustomed to be paid.

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since that period been again broken open, though without affording any pillage to the plunderers, it being a rule with the officers to leave no property whatever in money, on their retirement from the office. The receipt of monies collected for his majesty's use are, upon an average, about £15,000. per annum. Whilst we mention the custom house, we must not forget to notice the improving state of

THE PORT.

It has been shewn, that of ancient time "ships of A.D.
"great burden resorted to the town of Wisbech," but 1200.
upon the course of the river Ouse being changed, and the great body of water diverted through the artificial cut at Littleport chayre, before mentioned,* whilst Lynn, by the enlargement of its river, not only became a more considerable port, but increased its trade and shipping, the port of Wisbech proportionably declined, and the trade and shipping thereof diminished. During the time of the guild, no notice whatever is taken of the port, although in many instances guilds were established for commercial purposes. The one at Wisbech seems to have been dedicated to religious purposes only.† The proceedings of the guild in their earlier records are entirely silent relative to the port, unless the following agreement made in 1583 may be considered as having 1583.
any reference thereto, viz. "It was agreed by the ten "men, in the name of the inhabitants, that whereas a "controversy was likely to arise *between the patentees* "*granted by her majesty for bringing in of salt*, and the "inhabitants of Wysbeche, that if any trial should take "place, it should be borne at the common charge of the "town, and that the cause as tending to the libertie of

* Page 24. † Page 140.

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"Wysbeche should be paid out of the town stock." In the time of Charles I. Wisbech must certainly have arrived at some degree of eminence as a port, if we may judge from the large sum paid as "ship money." This levy, it is well known, was the beginning of the troubles in those unhappy times. The mode was, "That a writ "was framed and directed to the sheriff of every county "of England, to provide a ship of war for the king's "service, and to send it amply provided and fitted by "such a day to such a place;" and with that writ were sent to each sheriff instructions that, "instead of a ship, "he should levy upon his county such a sum of money, "and return the same to the treasurer of the navy, "for his majesty's use," with directions in what manner he should proceed against such as refused; and from hence that tax had the denomination of "ship money," by which it is said that for some years there accrued annually the sum of £200,000. to the king's coffers.*

A.D. 1634. On 19th November 1634, at a court held at the city of Norwich, it was agreed that the sheriffs of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, with the mayors of Lynn, Yarmouth, &c. should be entertained, at the public cost, about the business of "ship money," the assessment whereof caused many debates between the city of Norwich and counties of Norfolk and Cambridge, and the *burghs* of Castle Rising, Lynn, Thetford, Yarmouth, and *Wisbitch*, concerning the separate proportions that each should bear towards the charge of each ship, which was estimated at £5,500. of which

* Lord John Russell on English Government, p. 69.

There is an original writ for the levying of ship money remaining amongst the corporation records, but from age and negligence, the writing is so very much defaced and obliterated, as to render it nearly unintelligible.

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	£.
Thetford, Castle Rising, and about fifty-three coast towns in the county, raised	1427
Norwich	1601
Lynn	1192
Yarmouth	940
Wisbitch	340
	£ 5,500

This latter sum was in all probability felt severely by the inhabitants of Wisbech, for the burgesses dispatched one of their body to London this year, to endeavour to free them from the tax; and at another period, two of their body went to London to procure a mitigation only of the tax, but the success attending such attempt does not appear. In an ancient record of the year 1647, it is stated that Wisbech was at this time a town of good trade, where there was a navigable river, being within two miles of the sea,* and from thence came coals, salt fish, and various other kinds of merchantable wares. Some time after, the port of Lynn assumed a right to exercise jurisdiction over the port of Wisbech, as a member of Lynn, and accordingly orders were given through the officers of the customs at Lynn, for all vessels arriving at Wisbech to load only at certain places; and on the inhabitants of Wisbech refusing to comply with such order, a suit was commenced in his majesty's exchequer by the corporation of Lynn, against the burgesses of Wisbech; a commission was thereupon

A. D. 1647.

* At this time Crabbe Marsh was open to the sea, the surface of which was common waste, but was embanked and inclosed soon after this period.

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issued, and, on hearing the reasons alleged, the inhabitants of Wisbech obtained their suit, and established their independence in every respect. Four commissioners afterwards, by virtue of a commission from the
A.D. barons of the exchequer, certified that on the 16th
1676. October 1676, they had repaired unto the port of Wisbech, and surveyed the open places there and thereabout; and by virtue of the said commission, did thereupon appoint all that open place, key, or wharf, beginning from the north north-east side of the common stairs, and called the Bull stairs, and so directly south south-west to the house of John Growne,* in length three hundred and eighty feet or thereabouts, and in breadth sixteen feet, bounded with the town of Wisbech towards the south south-east, and the haven along the said key or wharf towards the west north-west, to be the place, key, or wharf for the landing or discharging, loading or shipping of any goods, wares, or merchandize within the said port of Wisbech; and to prevent any further disputes, touching the limits of the said port, did declare the same to extend from the sluice, called the old sluice,† &c. Some further occurrences took place afterwards, and the absolute independence
1680. of the port of Wisbech was declared in the year 1680. The capital burgesses of Wisbech then began to dedicate more attention towards advancing the benefit of the port, and made an application to the Trinity House of Deptford Strond for certain powers of beaconage, &c. who granted them an authority to set up from time to

* John Growne's house was the corner one at the bottom of Ship Lane, on the south western side, opposite to the Bell inn.

† The original documents relating to the independence of the port of Wisbech are in the custody of the capital burgesses, filed amongst their other ancient records.

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time such buoys and beacons in the channel, as to them should seem meet, for the better safety and preservation of all ships coming into and going out of the said channel, and to receive of the masters of all vessels certain duties towards defraying the charges of such buoys, confirming by their authority (dated 11th May 1710) what the said burgesses or their successors should do. Whereupon an officer was first appointed to look after such buoys and beacons, called a "Curator," and the collector of his majesty's customs was directed to receive the beaconage fees, and account to the town bailiff. Notwithstanding these laudable endeavours, the river seems to have been in a deplorable state of obstruction A.D. for the purpose of navigation, for in 1727, a letter is 1727. addressed by the then collector of the customs, referring to the said commission of 16th October 1676, stating that the lawful quay for shipping and landing goods was appointed to be within the town of Wisbech, but that at this period the haven was such, that no vessel of above thirty tons could ordinarily come up to the town,* which necessitated the shipping and unlading of goods at eight and sometimes twelve miles distant from Wisbech, and the carriage of such goods between the ships and the town in such cases was by barges and lighters.†

Prodigious heaps of sand lie in the bay between Norfolk and Lincolnshire, and the Wisbech river having no certain channel to sea after it leaves its banks, spreads amongst the sands, which cause great impediments to

* Documents from the custom house ascertaining this fact were politely furnished by the collector and comptroller.

† Lighters are a small kind of craft.

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the navigation. Kinderley,* in his introduction, observes, "That such is the natural situation in these parts, that "the tides upon our coast of England all coming from "the north, flow southward, and so the tide not "passing *through*, but as it were *by* this level, as in "an eddy, always leaves something behind it, which "heightens the soil, and is the reason whereby these "parts, formerly nearest the sea, are now at this day "higher than the parts more remote."† The sea is always deep in proportion to the height of the coast: if the coast be low, then the sea is shallow; if the coast is very high, then the sea is deep. The bay is full of shoals and shifting sands, and greatly exposed to many boisterous winds from the north to the south-east, which, joining to the action of the tides, must occasion great obstructions in the outlets and streams emptying themselves into the bay. The corporation and inhabitants were not then insensible to the bad state of the navigation, but they felt that the evils were too great to be surmounted by the limited means placed at their disposal. In 1735, the limits of the port were set forth by a commission issued to certain persons duly authorized, who reported to the barons of the exchequer, that they had repaired unto Wisbech, and defined the limits of the said port‡ to extend and be accounted from the point of Sutton salt marsh, called Sutton Corner, that is to say, a point of that marsh belonging

* Kinderley, p. 77. † Ibid. page 80.

‡ This certificate is signed by Henry Hare, *Collector of Lynn.*
John Child, *Deputy Customer of Lynn.*
Edmund Cobb, *Collector of Wisbech.*
William Johnson, *Collector of Boston.*
John Keene, *Collector of Wells.*

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to Lutton, where the Lutton Leam falls into the Wisbech channel, and divides the two parishes, Sutton and Lutton; and from thence to the Wisbech channel, by a line drawn from Sutton Corner to Terrington church, the said church bearing south south-east from Sutton Corner; and from the said line or limits, up the Wisbech channel and river, to Wisbech bridge. In 1751, the state of the river is again represented to be so disastrous, that whereas forty years ago, small vessels, though not without some difficulty, might sail up to the town, now even those were forced to lie at the Washway.* The time, however, was now arriving for great improvements in the navigation, brought about at length by the spirit of enterprize in the drainage of the adjacent fens; and the plan for straightening the course of the river to a limited extent was strongly advocated, which, though at first opposed, was at length carried into effect, through certain clauses in the Tid and Newton Act of 1773,† by abandoning the old river, and making a new straight cut through the marshes, as before described in the history of the north level, which has ever since been called Kinderley's Cut. The town of Wisbech soon experienced the advantage of the alteration in the course of their river, by the progressively improved state of their navigation, and the advancement of the commerce of the port, which has been materially increasing ever since that period. The first land flood, which came in October, ground down the bottom of the new channel many feet deeper than it was cut, lowered the surface of the

A.D. 1751. 1773.

* It is a common thing for people in a very dry time to walk over the bottom of the river under the bridge, the river is so shallow. *Kinderley*, p. 70. About the year 1749, Wisbech is said to have exported to London 52,000 quarters of oats, 1,000 tons of rape seed oil, and 8,000 firkins of butter.

† See page 66.

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water at Gunthorpe sluice five feet, and not only gave immediate relief to the north level, but vessels of much larger burthen than before were enabled to get up to
A.D. Wisbech.* In the month of August, in the year
1793. 1793, the unusual number of forty-three ships were lying at Sutton Washway. The general description of vessels trading to this port, and coming up to the town, are small country vessels, of from sixty to eighty tons burthen, and drawing about six feet water; and in ordinary spring tides, for the last three years, the water has averaged a depth of nine feet, which is amply sufficient for the navigation of vessels of one hundred tons burthen. About twenty of this description annually come up to the town, and the navigation is always found to be best when the channel lies on the western or Lincolnshire side. This kind of vessels is principally employed in the export of corn to Yorkshire. Vessels of one hundred and forty tons burthen in the coal trade arrive at a place called the Eye, and Sutton Wash, about ten miles distant from Wisbech, and from thence the coals are usually re-shipped into lighters, and then sent into the interior. The burgesses of Wisbech, in their corporate capacity, are the guardians of the port and harbour, and are entitled to receive, by ancient prescriptive right, from all vessels clearing in and out of the port, certain tonnage duties, which are appropriated towards the preservation and improvement of the said port. They appoint a harbour master, with a salary, whose duty is to regulate the mooring of vessels; and an individual having, at his own expense, set up a beacon, called the West-Mark-Knock, the corporation entered into a treaty with him for the purchase

* See page 67.

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thereof, in order that no strangers might presume to interfere with them in the management or dues of the port. They gave to this gentleman £200. for his right, and afterwards directed an additional number of buoys and beacons to be provided, all of which are now maintained at the charge of the corporation, and certain regular pilots appointed, with salaries, and a superintendant over them, to see that they discharge their duties justly and faithfully to all masters of vessels resorting to the port.

About the year 1809, the inhabitants of Wisbech came to a determination to have recourse to parliament, to enable them to effect certain improvements in the town; and the corporation, fully alive to the state of their navigation, and the importance of further melioration, resolved to apply for power to lay additional duties on the tonnage; but aware also that in consequence of the proximity of the neighbouring ports, a heavy tonnage duty might be the means of driving the trade away from Wisbech, they felt unwilling to impose any large tax, so as to become burthensome to the trade. In the next year, the act for the general improvement of the town, as well as for preserving and improving the port and harbour of Wisbech, and for increasing the duties of the port, passed, when its limits were defined to be "from "a certain house called Bevis' hall, at or near the "boundary which divides the parishes of Wisbech "St. Peter's and Wisbech St. Mary's, on the north "brink of the river, down and along the channel of "the river, and the coasts and shores on each side "thereof, towards and unto the limits of the port of "Boston, and the limits of the port of Lynn respectively;" and that the harbour of Wisbech should extend from such places within the limits of the port, as the capital

A.D. 1809. 1810.

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burgesses or their successors should appoint, with a power to receive by way of duty, for the use of the burgesses of the town of Wisbech in their corporate capacity, three pence for every chaldron of coals delivered from any ship arriving at, or coming to, or leaving the port of Wisbech, and the like sum per ton for all other goods and merchandizes, and double the duty for all foreigners; which duties are vested in the burgesses in their corporate capacity, and are to be disposed of in discharging the expenses of collecting and receiving the duties, *and in and towards the making of any necessary works within the port and harbour, and in and towards the improvement of the said port and harbour, in such manner as the capital burgesses and their successors should from time to time think expedient.* In pursuance of which act, the burgesses have already made and maintained divers beneficial works in respect to the river and harbour. The duties granted by the said act bring in a revenue at this time of between £800. and £900. per annum, all of which has not been expended, by reason that the corporation are husbanding their resources, to enable them to execute expensive works contemplated for confining and straightening the channel of the river. A considerable sum has in fact accumulated in the hands of the capital burgesses, which is vested, and ready to be laid out in and towards the improvement of the port. The merchants lately made complaint of the negligence of the pilots, and on the corporation applying to the Trinity House at Hull, that body offered to appoint five of the capital burgesses of Wisbech sub-commissioners, and to give them full power to examine the qualifications of the persons officiating as pilots, and to grant licences to such only as should appear to them to be duly

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qualified to act as such, and to regulate the rates of pilotage, and to form rules and bye laws for their due government.

A person of weight and respectability has been appointed as their headsman, who is to have the authority and management over the pilots. On examination, the pilot sloop belonging to the corporation; being found insufficient, was ordered to be enlarged with all practicable dispatch, at the expense of the corporation, and a building was recommended to be erected at Sutton Washway, to answer the purpose of a pilot office and look-out into the deeps, the execution of which was only postponed on account of works of great importance at that time pending at the Washway.

By referring to the entries at the custom house, it is shewn that the number of vessels cleared during the year ending January 1826 amounted to 1164 coastwise, and 45 foreign; that the tonnage amounted to 70,320 tons, and that the custom house duty paid at the port in the same year was £29,531. 15*s*. 9*d*. The tonnage duties paid to the burgesses of Wisbech in their corporate capacity have gradually augmented in the same proportions, as may appear from the subjoined account.

The following is the gross receipt and expenditure on account of the duties for the port of Wisbech for the last twenty years, ending 10th October 1825, and the amount of receipts for his majesty's customs for the same period:

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Year.	Tonnage.	Port Duties. £.	s.	d.	Expenditure. £.	s.	d.	Annual duties paid to government. £.	s.	d.	Observations.
1805	29,242¾	205	2	3¼	142	17	0¼	7865	10	6¼	
1806	29,816¾	209	12	1	127	16	3¼	8586	6	5½	
1807	28,313¾	198	19	2¼	122	17	0¼	7071	3	0	
1808	35,416¼	248	4	0	135	10	3½	8767	1	9½	
1809	32,128¾	225	19	1	130	15	9½	9064	19	11	
1810	23,639	166	3	10¼							to 19th July 1810, when the town act came into operation.
1810	11,315¼	141	8	10¼	442	4	6	9201	4	4½	from 19th July 1810, to 10th October 1810.
1811	46,243¾	579	10	1½	457	6	10½	9565	13	10¼	
1812	45,340¼	566	15	1½	364	7	8	10,275	12	3	
1813	43,110¾	541	2	0¼	666	15	7¼	10,233	18	0¼	
1814	42,584¼	532	6	1½	433	11	6½	10,479	2	3	
1815	38,995½	487	8	11	331	0	0	7001	1	1¼	
1816	46,611¼	582	12	9½	680	3	0¼	8432	15	0	
1817	51,860¼	648	5	1½	242	13	7	9629	10	10¼	
1818	64,191¼	808	13	9½	778	17	3¼	14,407	8	1½	
1819	52,622¼	667	15	7½	726	14	6½	14,247	16	3¼	
1820	62,030¾	781	11	6¼	394	9	8	14,533	14	2	
1821	52,191	654	9	9	480	13	5¼	10,225	4	10½	
1822	60,140	753	11	3	384	10	6¼	11,183	11	8¼	
1823	64,611	816	1	6	530	3	0½	15,835	3	7	
1824	70,000$\frac{15}{86}$	880	7	7	870	16	7	16,236	11	3	Including the sum of £7682. 6s. 10d. on goods secured on bond.
1825	70,321¼	885	5	6¼	645	11	10¼	29,531	15	9	

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The corn sent coastwise in the year 1826 was about 121,000 quarters, with about 2240 quarters of rape seed. The coals brought coastwise were about 37,680 chaldrons, with about 7470 tons of other articles of merchandize. The imports, consisting principally of timber from the north of Europe, in the year 1825, amounted to 7093 tons, and in 1826, to 1824 tons: there are two bonding yards for the reception of this article.*

The following names of the several collectors of customs are extracted from the custom house books:

1670 Thomas Buckworth	1729 Edmund Cobb
1689 John Arden	1753 John Flanner
1716 John Ryland	1767 John Fearnside
1720 Samuel Jacomb	1773 George Hewes
1725 John Childe	1793 Thomas Wraight
1727 John Wooseley	1823 Richard Cater.

THE CANAL.

About the year 1792, there was a rage throughout the kingdom for forming canals, and on the 30th October in that year,† a very numerous meeting of merchants and others interested took place at Wisbech, in order to consider of proposals for making a navigable cut from Wisbech river to join the old river Nene at Outwell, and for improving the navigation from Outwell church to Salter's Lode sluice. The meeting was fully attended, not only by the inhabitants of Wisbech, but by numbers

* Since the repeal of the prohibition laws respecting wool, there has been no separate account kept of that commodity.

† The Hon. and Rev. C. Lindsay was in the chair, and Mr. Watté, the engineer, delivered in his report and estimate.

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from the midland counties, who shewed great anxiety to obtain shares. The intention was, to open a communication by water between Wisbech and Outwell, and thus to form an inland navigation from the great river at Wisbech, to the Ouse, commencing at the old sluice in Wisbech, and taking a straight course, in the same direction for part of the distance as the old navigable river from Wisbech to the Nene, called Elm Leam,* which had been for many years grown up and become totally useless, not only for navigation, but for drainage. It was considered that such a plan would be of great public utility, and open a safe and easy communication between the port of Wisbech and the several counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Bedford, Norfolk, and Suffolk, and other parts, which would be the means of extending trade and commerce. The subscribers were accordingly formed into a company, who were empowered, by an act of parliament passed in the year 1794, to make the navigation, and all necessary works. The price of each share was originally fixed at £100. and was afterwards extended to £120.† However convenient the communication and intercourse have been found, very little benefit has yet resulted to the shareholders and proprietors.

* See page 39.

† 12th March 1794, a temporary road was opened, to continue until the sluice bridge was made nearer the Bell inn, and piles began to be driven; but so great was the obstruction occasioned by the waters, that they did not begin to lay down the timber to form the floor of the sluice until the first of November following. On Tuesday, November 11th, they began to open the old leam; on the 14th, the frame was fixed for one of the doors, and the next day the brickwork was begun.

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THE WORKHOUSE.

This receptacle for the helpless poor is situated at the entrance of the town by the Lynn road. It was built in the year 1722, at the expense of £2000. borrowed by the capital burgesses on their seal. This house, as a parochial concern, excites respect. The general arrangement reflects credit on the overseers, and may be viewed on application to the master of the house, on any proper occasion, and it is at all times in neat and comfortable order. A workhouse, it is said, should never be without a manufactory, and it must be acknowledged that it would be beneficial if one were attached to this building and properly managed. The cost of the poor is about three shillings per head per week, upon a scale, according to the price of wheat, which, when above fifty shillings, and under sixty shillings per quarter, is three shillings per head per week, and above forty shillings, and under fifty shillings per quarter, two shillings and nine pence. The usual assessment to the poor rates is about six shillings in the pound; the actual rent of the parish is about £20,000. from which there are several deductions, so that the sum raised for the poor rate may be calculated at £5,000. per annum; the county rate falls very heavy, being not less than £360. per annum.*

In the summer months, about forty are relieved out of the house, and sixty within; and in winter, about sixty out of the house, and eighty within. The relief afforded to the out-door paupers is very considerable. The law expenses do not exceed on an average £90. per annum.

* By the return for the year ending Easter 1804, published by parliament, the money then raised was £3,304. 16s. 7d. at six shillings in the pound. At that time the number of paupers was estimated on an average of years, to be one hundred and thirty nine, after the rate of £9. each per annum, or about three shillings and sixpence per week.

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PUBLIC CHARITIES.

Benevolence, like the river that watered the garden of Eden, scatters blessings as it flows: so powerfully diffused are its salutary streams, that they are frequently known to convert a wilderness of sorrow into a paradise of bliss.

Many benevolent individuals have left considerable benefactions to this town.

The Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, M.A. late of St. John's College, Cambridge, and vicar of Swaffham Bulbeck, and of Elm cum Emneth, in the county of Cambridge, published an account thereof about five years since,* and every person to whose management any charitable concerns are entrusted, either public or private, would do well to peruse it. It would be a detraction from the merits of that work to make any partial extracts, but we cannot refrain from stating one short observation: "That of "whatever nature the property may be, whence the funds "of any charity arise, it is unquestionably the duty of "those entrusted with it to make the most they fairly "can of it, and conscientiously to apply the whole "proceeds according to the declared purpose of the "founder. Every person, that undertakes the manage- "ment of any estate of this description, must be "understood to pledge himself to both; and to be "deficient in either of them, is a fraud upon the charity "in all cases, though of greater malignity in some than

* The work is entitled 'Some Account of the Principal Public Charities of Wisbech St. Peter's, &c. by Jeremiah Jackson, M. A. 1822.'

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"in others." With this remark, a brief account of the several charities belonging to the town of Wisbech will now be given; and first of

THE ALMSHOUSES.

The guild of the holy trinity held certain buildings used as almshouses, although the situation is not precisely known. As early as 1476, an order is made for "all the buildings of the guild to be repaired, where "defective, and principally, a certain new building "called the almshouses." And in 1512, two persons were appointed to have the supervisal of the almshouses, &c. and to place and displace persons most infirm. There are certain houses, containing six several apartments, set apart for as many poor, aged, and disabled persons, situated on the north side of the church, and which are often known by the name 'King John's 'Almshouses;' but the description of the gift made by Thomas Blower in the year 1477 points out the site of these very buildings as abutting on the church yard west, and common way east, which, with reasonable accuracy, agrees with the present abuttal. A.D. 1476. 1512.

Mrs. STURMYN gave to the capital burgesses £100. for erecting a market house, and also £100. for erecting four almshouses for aged persons to live in. This latter sum was applied in erecting four houses on the site where the new house of correction and shire hall now stand, which four houses, being very decayed, were in the year 1810 pulled down, and six other almshouses erected by the capital burgesses on a piece of ground south-east of the church, near the gate opposite to the national school for boys, on which is the following inscription: 1610.

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"These six almshouses were erected by the burgesses of "the town of Wisbech, A.D. 1813." The original almshouses of Mrs. Sturmyn were burnt down with other buildings in 1651, but rebuilt in the following year.

A.D. 1631. Dr. HAWKINS, who was a native of Wisbech, and died in London in 1631, gave £300. towards building certain almshouses, which also are situated on the south-east of the church, near those last mentioned. A stone, on which is inscribed "Anno Dom. 1625. Henry Hawkins, Dr. of "Laws, born in Wisbech, deceased at London, built "these almshouses for habitation of six poor families," marks the donation of the founder.

1811. Mrs. MAYER'S asylum is a noble and beneficent institution. The late Mrs. Judith Mayer, of Wisbech, by her will dated 20th May 1811, and who died in the month of September following, gave to Robert Walpole, esq. and Hugh Jackson, gent. £500. to be laid out in the erection of an asylum, to be called after her name, for the reception of such poor persons in Wisbech as might happen to be afflicted with palsy, rheumatism, gout, blindness, or any other complaint, to render them objects of compassion; and to the capital burgesses, the vicar, and churchwardens, the sum of £1200. in trust, to apply the dividends (except £5.) towards keeping such building in repair, and for the benefit of such poor persons, whose bodily afflictions and meritorious conduct rendered them fit objects; and the said £5. per annum is to be given, one moiety to the vicar, and one moiety to the churchwardens, for their trouble. She also gave £400. further, making altogether £2100. the interest of one half of the said £400. to be distributed amongst such of the poor of Wisbech as the

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capital burgesses, vicar, and churchwardens should deem proper objects, and to expend the interest of the other half in the purchase of coals for the persons dwelling in the several almshouses.

It is well known that the statute of Mortmain * directs that no lands or tenements, or money to be laid out thereon, shall be given for or charged with any charitable uses whatever, unless by deed indented, executed in the presence of two witnesses, *twelve months before the death of the donor, and enrolled in chancery within six months after its execution;* it so happened that Mrs. Mayer died four months after the making of her will, whereby the bequest of the said two sums of £ 500. and £ 1200. became void in law, and thus failing of effect, the whole thereof lapsed to the said Hugh Jackson, who was appointed residuary legatee and executor of Mrs. Mayer's will. Mr. Jackson has resided many years in Wisbech, with high reputation amongst his neighbours, not only for his integrity and uncorrupt mind, but for his general benevolence. The effects of the latter are shewn in deed and in truth by his substantially determining to fulfil, and fulfilling, what he conceived to be the actual and real intention of the testatrix; and in order to carry into execution the trusts of the said will, in respect to the building and endowment of the said asylum, he erected five tenements or dwelling houses, denominating the same "Mrs. Mayer's Asylum;" having expended in the building and completing thereof a sum of money considerably above the £ 500. bequeathed for that purpose; and he further laid out and invested £ 1200. in the names of himself and two other trustees, in govern-

* 9th George II. c. 36.

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ment securities, to be applicable towards the support of the said asylum, and for the use and benefit of the poor persons residing therein; and the further sum of £400. was invested in the names of the like trustees in the £4. per cent. consols, in trust, to apply such a proportion thereof as would annually purchase one chaldron of good sea coals, for the benefit of each of the inhabitants for the time being, resident in each of the said five several tenements, and the remaining proportion of dividend in the purchase of like coals, to be annually distributed amongst the other poor, dwelling in the several other almshouses within the town.

THE CASTLE ALMSHOUSES

A.D. 1813. were built by Mr. Joseph Medworth in the year 1813, for five poor women. He, during his life, makes the appointment, and takes the direction thereof under his own management.

There were likewise certain almshouses situate on the south side of the church yard, near the vicar's garden, pulled down at the time when Dr. Burrough was vicar 1757. of the parish, about the year 1757; and there were also others at the entrance into Deadman's Lane, next the gate adjoining the door of the castle gardens, near the pond.

OTHER CHARITIES.

1626. Mr. WILLIAM SCOTRED gave by deed twelve acres of pasture in Wisbech St. Mary's, in Sayer's field, to trustees, the full rents whereof he directed to be paid yearly to the churchwardens of Wisbech St. Peter's, for

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the use of the poor for ever: the said churchwardens to distribute the same, and relieve the most needful poor of Wisbech St. Peter's, as the proper gift of the said William Scotred.

THOMAS PARKE, esq. by will, gave his house at the end of Ship Lane, in Wisbech, with all the buildings thereto belonging, to the corporation of the town of Wisbech, to provide shoes and hose for the use of the poor of the said parish for ever. This charity has for many years been in the hands of feoffees, who received the rents, and distributed them for the use of the poor; but the corporation have lately resumed the trust.* He also gave twenty-eight acres of land in Elm, to increase the stipend of the schoolmaster, which is received by him, and the land let and managed at his discretion. He also gave one hundred marks to amend the highway between Lynn and Wisbech. A.D. 1628.

ROBERT LOVICKE gave six acres of pasture in Terrington St. John's, in Church field, on trust, to pay £3. 10*s.* for preaching seven sermons between Easter and Whit Sunday. 1635.

ETHELDRED PARKE, the widow of Thomas Parke, esq. gave five acres of land in Wisbech, out of the rents whereof 13*s.* 4*d.* was to be paid for a sermon on the 2d November, or in neglect thereof, to be distributed to the poor, and the residue was to provide, 1639.

* On a stone affixed in front of the building are these words: "Thomas "Parke, esq. gave this house for the clothing of the poor people of "Wisbech. Rebuilt 1704."

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yearly, cloth for three poor women for gowns. She also gave fifteen acres of land in Emneth, out of the rent whereof seven pounds yearly was to be paid for sermons on saint days.

Mr. JOHN CRANE was an apothecary of Cambridge,* and in Mackerill's Account of Lynn, is stated to have been a very charitable person to the royalists in the time of the usurpation, whom he privately relieved; and gave at his death to charitable uses £3,000. Several towns shared in his benefactions. 26th June 1651, by will, he gave a certain inn called the Black Bull, in Wisbech,† with outbuildings thereto belonging; one half of the revenue to amend the schoolmaster's wages of the free grammar school, and the other half to be laid out in corn and firing, to be given to the poor of the same town about Christmas.‡ He also appointed his executors to purchase land to produce £60. per annum; the first year's rent he gave to the university of Cambridge, for poor scholars that were sick, to come once in five years; the second year's revenue to the town of Wisbech, to be lent to young men to help to set them up, and to pay it back in twenty years without interest, and this to continue until there should be £200. stock, coming every fifth year; the third year's revenue to the town of of Cambridge, in the same manner; the fourth year's revenue to the town of King's Lynn, and the fifth to

* Fuller says he was born at Wisbech.

† Now called the New Inn, in the same line of houses with the Rose and Crown inn.

‡ This donation is distributed on the 21st December, (St. Thomas's day) in every year.

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the town of Ipswich (being the town where Mr. Butler,* of famous memory, was buried) with the like conditions. After the stock of £200. accumulated for each town, then the every fifth year's rent of the land, when purchased, should be received by each corporation, after bestowing thereout two pounds for having a sermon preached in each town for the year in which the rent is received; then the remainder to be "given and bestowed upon honest, poor "men, that be in prison for debt, or old women, or for the "relief of poor men in want, or to relieve them out of "prison for debt; and that the trustees should relieve the "most honest, godliest, and religious persons, men and "women, in the said several towns, that have lived "well, and had a good report, being fallen into decay "by some extraordinary occasion, and not to give it to "dissembling, hypocritical persons."

The money was laid out in the purchase of an estate at Fleet, in Lincolnshire, consisting of one hundred and eighty-one acres, three roods, thirty-seven perches; the rents of which are appropriated in quinquennial rotation to the university of Cambridge, and the towns of Wisbech, Cambridge, Lynn, and Ipswich, for the use of the poor there. The income under the old leases amounted to £395. 10s. per annum, and these expiring at Lady-day 1827, the estate was then let for one year, on conditions very beneficial to the property, at the sum of £439.

* Mr. William Butler was a physician, born at Ipswich, and educated at Clare Hall. He practised at Cambridge without a degree, but the oddity of his manners, and the bold method in which he treated his patients, often successfully, rendered him a favourite in his profession. Some anecdotes of him are recorded, which exhibit him more as a capricious character than a man of sound sense. He died in 1618, aged 82. He left no writings behind him.

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The town of Ipswich will receive the rents due at Lady-day 1828
The university of Cambridge, in..... 1829
town of Wisbech, in 1830
town of Cambridge, in 1831
town of Lynn, in 1832

An allotment of land, containing eight acres, in Wisbech High Fen, was set out in right of the house given by Mr. Crane's will, now called the New Inn.

A.D. 1656. LORD VISCOUNT SAYE and SELE gave £100. to the capital burgesses, the interest of which is annually expended in clothing for poor people, which the capital burgesses provide at Christmas.

1656. WILLIAM HOLMES gave £200. to be lent in sums of £10. a piece to poor tradesmen for three years, without paying any interest. He also gave £400. to be bestowed in land, for the placing and maintenance of two scholars at St. Mary Magdalen College, Cambridge. This was laid out in the purchase of forty acres of land at Holbeach, in Lincolnshire, which then produced a rent of £20. per annum, but is now let on lease at £60. per annum, and the accumulation of the unapplied rents amounts at this day to about £2,500. stock in the three per cent. annuities, besides the rent of the said estate at Holbeach.

Mr. Thomas Grainger Hall was the last young person who received the benefit of this benevolent institution of the founder. This gentleman was educated by the Rev. J. Jackson, and pursued his studies with such perseverance, that in the senate-house examination of the year 1824, he

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distinguished himself by obtaining a wrangler's degree,* being fifth in rotation, besides obtaining three prizes of books from his college, in testimony of his superior attainments. Mr. Holmes was a native of Wisbech, and left this bequest, for the space of seven years, to scholars of the grammar school, born in the parish of Wisbech, and who had been educated there for three years, and whose friends' and parents' estates were not wholly sufficient to maintain them as scholars in the university of Cambridge. The present revenue is about £140. per annum for the two scholarships.

Secretary THURLOE gave £150.; the interest to be applied towards putting out poor children apprentices. He gave £50. to make a causeway from the corn market to the little sluice; and also £50. for purchasing books to be added to the public library in the church. A.D. 1658.

RICHMOND GIRLING by will gave £2. to be distributed every ten years amongst the most honest, poor people, by the churchwardens, issuing out of lands in Stradbroke, in Suffolk. This will be due to the parish of Wisbech in the year 1828. 1658.

Mrs. MIDDLECOTE by will gave £2. to be paid yearly for six sermons on Wednesdays in Lent. 1658.

Mr. HENRY PIERSON gave most of his books to the church library. 1664.

* The terms Wranglers, Senior Optimes, and Junior Optimes, are honorary distinctions at the university of Cambridge, originally applied to those who excelled in scholastic disputations, and which are still retained, now that the merits of the students are ascertained by more certain criteria. The young men are arranged in order, according to their attainments, as determined by an examination which occupies the five preceding days.

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A.D. 1669. Mr. RICHARD ROYCE gave sixteen acres of land in Wisbech fen, out of the rents whereof was to be bought a piece of plate for the church, and afterwards, the rents were to be applied in the purchase of clothing for poor widows, which is provided for them at Christmas.

1701. Mr. RICHARD LOAKE also bequeathed £100.; the interest to be applied in clothing five poor widows or housekeepers. This also is laid out by the capital burgesses for such purpose every Christmas.

1729. Mrs. ELIZABETH WRIGHT, formerly of Wisbech, was a splendid benefactress to the town; she gave a house near the bridge, which now lets for £60. per annum, to the use of the charity school for boys; she also directed £12. per annum to be paid out of her estates to the girls' charity school. She gave a certain estate at Sutton, the rents whereof are to be applied amongst honest, necessitous women, that have lived in good credit and reputation, and attend at church; and the profits of all other parts of her estates, not before appropriated, she gave to such charitable uses and in such manner as her trustees in their discretion should think fit. The amount of rent of these latter estates, independent of the house given to the boys' school, has of late been £340., making together £400. per annum.

Mrs. JANE BELLAMY, widow of John Bellamy, esq. by her will gave £200. to such charitable uses as should be judged most proper by her executors, who appropriated the money to the boys' charity school.

1793. Mr. JOHN BAXTER gave to the capital burgesses the interest of £1,200. his property in the funds, being then in the navy five per cents. in trust, to allow annually

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£10. each to such poor old men or women, totally incapacitated from labour, as should be by them thought fit and proper objects; with this injunction—that they should constantly attend divine worship every Sunday, and on neglect thereof, the charity to be discontinued: he died in 1798.

THE SCHOOL FOR BOYS

is supported by the benefactions of several pious persons,* and Dr. Jobson added to these donations £100. The first stone of this school was laid the 16th July 1811. It is calculated for the accommodation of two hundred and fifty boys. In this school, the principles of the Christian religion are to be taught, according to the doctrine and practice of the church of England, and the admirable method of instruction is pursued, which was originally suggested and successfully practised by Dr. Bell: the end and aim are to imbue the minds of those on its foundation with such seasonable knowledge as will make them useful members of society; and with such salutary instruction, that they may with their growing years advance in that wisdom which will teach them, as dutiful children, to increase in affection to their parents, in obedience to their superiors, and in piety to God.† The funds of this school are in a flourishing condition. A.D. 1811.

* Bequests to this school were made by Joseph Taylor, esquire, Mrs. Southwell, Mr. North, Mr. Edwards, several of the bishops of Ely, Mrs. Trafford Southwell, &c.

† At the anniversary of the society held in Baldwin's Gardens, London, in 1826, it appeared from the report of the committee read by Dr. Walmesley, that the whole number of schools established on Dr. Bell's plan was 2,200, in which there are now educating 330,000 children.

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THE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

This institution has long existed on a small scale, but in modern times has been much enlarged, through the munificent donations of the same Dr. Jobson, whose name is honourably connected with all our charities, and the late John Edes, esq. of Wisbech, each of whom gave £500., which was laid out in the purchase of land in Leverington, consisting of 23A. 1R. 19P. let in 1814 at £55. per annum. These lands are settled as an endowment and perpetual support of the said school, and the children are to be instructed in Christian principles, according to the doctrine and practice of the church of England, and in the useful arts of knitting, sewing, &c.

THE DORCAS,

A.D. 1817. for enabling poor persons to purchase clothing at a cheap rate, is a most useful charity. The subscribers have tickets proportioned in number to the amount of their donations and subscriptions, which they give to any poor persons, whereby they are entitled to receive clothing double the value of the money brought.

THE SAVINGS BANK.

These societies being encouraged by the legislature, and considered highly conducive to the welfare of the poorer classes, as tending to improve their moral condition, by fostering a spirit of industry and economy, and to increase their external comforts, by providing a safe resource against sickness, old age, and calamity; a bank of this nature was established in the year 1818, under the sanction of an act then lately passed, by

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the name of "the Wisbech Savings Bank," for the benefit of this town and vicinity. A subscription was entered into for defraying the expenses attending the formation, which amounted to upwards of £400. Attendance is given every Saturday at the jury room in the shire hall, when such small sums as servants, journeymen, labourers, &c. may be able to save from their earnings, are received, and interest at the rate of £4. per cent. is allowed thereon.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

was kept up by a lady at her own expense for more than twelve years, until the number increased so as to become too large for a private room, when she found it necessary to limit the number. Another Sunday school was also for several years maintained by the joint expense and attendance of three other young ladies. Dr. Jobson, observing the happy effects produced by this system of gratuitous teaching, determined to form and establish a Sunday school for ever, and with his wonted liberality presented the corporation with £500., the interest whereof is to be employed in the education, on the Lord's day, of poor boys and girls resident in the town: the school to be under the direction of the capital burgesses, Mrs. Wright's trustees, and the subscribers to the national school. A.D. 1824.

THE HUMANE SOCIETY

has been established many years, but a greater degree of activity has lately been excited, and new regulations entered into. This useful institution, for the recovery of persons apparently drowned, employs its funds in defraying the expenses occasioned by using the method recommended for such purposes by the London Humane

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Society, and also in rewarding those who have been instrumental in rescuing any of their fellow-creatures from a watery grave, a guinea being given to such as take up a body. The drag, grappling irons, &c. are kept in the committee room of the workhouse. It is governed by a president, who is the town-bailiff of Wisbech for the time being, and a committee of twelve persons are chosen annually, with a secretary and treasurer. The corporation, the medical gentlemen in the town, and the churchwardens and overseers, are general managers.*

THE FEMALE FRIENDLY SOCIETY

is an unobtrusive and highly useful charity, founded in the year 1796, and managed by a committee of ladies. The practice of establishing beneficial clubs or societies amongst men, called "Friendly Societies," for their mutual benefit and relief, has been always considered to promote the welfare, as well as to relieve the necessities of the industrious and deserving part of mankind, which induced government to take such societies under their protection. Accordingly a few ladies† met together,

* There is an institution which would be a monument of philanthropy to its founders, and which many inhabitants would rejoice to see established, amongst the numerous benevolent societies of this town, as tending to relieve the miseries incident to the human race. A *dispensary* is the object alluded to, as a magazine for medicines to be dispensed at the prime cost of the ingredients, for the benefit of the sick poor. We trust, that if funds were once raised to form such an establishment, the benefits received from its resources would not only be acknowledged with gratitude, but that its directors would be enabled to dispense "healing medicine to the sons "and daughters of poverty and misfortune with liberality."

† This was one of the first of the public charities in this town, in which ladies interested themselves, by personal application, to solicit the benevolence of their neighbours, which, by its then novelty, led many of the inhabitants to treat their first address with a degree of ridicule, as if

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with a view to establish a society upon a similar plan, for the relief of such *women* as might think proper to unite for the same good and laudable purposes, and to contribute, by their industrious and prudent management, towards raising a fund for the relief of themselves in times of *sickness and old age*. With this view, a specific number of women within the town of Wisbech formed themselves into a society, subject to certain rules and regulations, under the patronage, and with the pecuniary aid of many ladies, and other respectable persons, who agreed to contribute their subscriptions, and are considered honorary members. The society is not to exceed one hundred members, exclusive of the honorary ones. Three or more stewards are appointed by the honorary members, who are a committee, for the purposes of the institution. A treasurer and secretary are appointed, and quarterly and annual meetings are holden, when reports are made of new members applying for admission, and of the state and condition of the sick. Refractory members (if any) are reproved, and abuses

unbecoming the delicacy of the female sex. Nevertheless, they persevered, and brought their good object to a prosperous accomplishment. At this time there are several excellent charities existing under the direction and personal visitation of the ladies. Such institutions must be acknowledged to be much to the honour of our fair country women, and it is no small recommendation for ladies associating for such benevolent purposes, to recollect that those who, with the tenderest assiduity, attended the Saviour at his death, and were the chief objects of his affectionate solicitude at that awful hour, were females. This society has rendered essential service to the destitute widow, and justly claims the approbation of the public, as well as reflects much honour on the original founders; and, it is trusted, the compiler will not offend the delicacy of the surviving ladies who originally constituted the committee from whence this institution sprung, by mentioning the names of Mrs. Peckover, Mrs. Rebecca Bellamy, Mrs. Garnham, and Mrs. Usill, the two latter of whom are deceased.

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endeavoured to be prevented. The best means are taken, by placing the money out at interest, to improve the fund, which at this time amounts £1629. 12*s*. No person is admitted above the age of forty-five, nor any person in bad health or of ill fame. Honorary members pay five shillings admittance, and six shillings and sixpence a year, continuing the same yearly; and each of the other members pay two shillings and sixpence entrance, and a subscription of sixpence halfpenny the first Monday in every month in advance. If any member be taken ill or lame, and cannot pursue her usual employment, (provided her misfortune does not arise from her own misconduct) she is allowed three shillings and sixpence per week for the first month of her confinement, and afterwards two shillings and sixpence a week, as long as the stewards think proper, until she shall recover. Twenty shillings is paid to a married woman, on the death of her husband, and five shillings for each of her children then living under the age of fourteen years. The monthly subscription of each single member and widow ceases at fifty-eight years of age, provided she has had no relief, (if otherwise, at sixty) and she then is to be paid the sum of £4. per annum for life, provided she became a member previous to, and £2. 12*s*. if after a certain year, and in either case exonerated from further payments.

From the time of the establishment, 1st February 1796, to 1st February 1827, this society has paid the aggregate sum of £1462. 11*s*. thirty-five women, on an average, being benefited by it in each year, viz.

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	£.	s.	d.
To women during their confinement in childbed, the sum of	335	0	0
During sickness, the sum of	414	16	0
Deprived of their husbands by death	46	15	0
The annuities, which commenced in 1811, amount to	666	0	0
	£ 1462	11	0

Twenty annuitants are now on the list, receiving £4. per annum during life.

The intention of the ladies was to have kept one hundred benefited members constantly upon the list, but when the annuities commenced, the income was discovered to be very inadequate to fulfil the claims thereon, which made it necessary to institute an inquiry into the state of the fund, the result of which was a resolution, that the then present members should receive annuities of £4. per annum, and that the future annuities to all members thereafter admitted should be £2. 12s. On account of the insufficiency of the fund, it was found necessary, in the year 1803, to reduce the number of persons benefited from one hundred to sixty, which have been since increased to eighty, where it is now stationary.*

* The extent or usefulness of this charity is not so generally known as it ought to be; it is possessed of peculiar claims upon the benevolent, under which impression, the compiler has been more copious in its description; for in sickness and old age, our fellow creatures have claims upon the feelings of their more affluent neighbours, and where can our abundance be bestowed

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CLOTHING THE NECESSITOUS POOR

is another excellent charity, instituted in the year 1816, supported by ladies. The donations are from three to six shillings, and the tickets are distributed to the poor in winter. The committee are always happy in expressing their grateful acknowledgments to such ladies as kindly aid the design of the institution by presents in clothing.

OTHER FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

for raising subscriptions amongst the male members thereof, or by voluntary contributions for their mutual relief, or maintenance of their members in old age, sickness, and infirmity, or for the relief of the widows and children of deceased members, are established in the town to the number of five, consisting altogether of more than four hundred and eighty members. The effects of these popular institutions are very salutary and beneficial to those who are most interested in their success—the mechanics and labourers of the kingdom. The smallness of the sums contributed renders their payments to be scarcely felt as a privation; while the assistance afforded in cases of sickness is of the utmost importance to the poor and their families. They also create a spirit of independence, the best antidote to the evils of the poor rate, and consequently induce habits of forethought, prudence, and industry. Besides these

more laudably, than in relieving the necessities of deserving and industrious sick and aged persons? Mrs. Metcalfe, the worthy secretary, who feels the strongest interest in promoting the benefits of this institution, has kindly furnished the compiler with the above particulars relating to it.

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public charities, there are many subscriptions for benevolent purposes, as well amongst those professing the principles of the established church, as amongst christians of other denominations, both collectively and individually, and several benefit or amicable societies are well supported.*

RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

Manifold as are the blessings, says Southey, for which Englishmen are beholden to the institutions of their country, there is no part of these institutions from which they derive more important advantages, than from its church establishment. That venerable church has provided in her liturgy a form of prayer, so beautiful, so devout, so correct, so scriptural, so admirably adapted, both as to its matter and language, "for all sorts and "conditions of men," that it has been frequently, and with much propriety, denominated the first of uninspired compositions. We cannot but consider those congregations who are deprived of it, however pious and efficient their ministers may be, as sustaining a great loss. We will not venture to assert that any division of the visible church of Christ is exclusively modelled on the standard of perfection: the members of every church should exercise mutual charity and forbearance, for it becomes the children of God to divest themselves of that bigotry which inclines some men to consider no others as Christians, but those who belong to their own church.

* The annual revenue derived from public charities in England, arising from rents and profits of messuages, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, from dividends belonging to any corporation or society of persons, or of any trust for charitable persons, is very considerable, and is said to amount to £ 972,399. 11s. The annual revenue in Wales, for similar purposes, to £ 3,519. 13s. 11d.; and in Scotland, to £ 53,079. 3s. 11d., making a gross total for England, Wales, and Scotland of £ 1,028,998. 8s. 10d.

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The true Christian will love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; he will admit that no part of the visible church is free from imperfections, and will acknowledge also, that every part of the building, which in its essentials is erected upon the foundation laid by Christ and his apostles, contains those who are members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of Heaven. Let us then love as brethren all those whom God receives as his children, and look forward with hope and expectation to the glorious period, when the church of Christ will be one in faith, hope, and love, and all live together in the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Let the spirit of Christian love and forbearance influence all our labours, and the precepts of the bible be our constant guide, whilst at the same time we admire that gracious gospel and those precious doctrines of "the truth as it is in Jesus," which God hath revealed to us in his Holy Scriptures, and which are able to make all who receive them "wise unto salvation." There are many bodies of Christians in this nation, who differ in some degree from the church of England, as established by law. No man, however, ought or is to be molested on account of his religion, who complies with the regulations required by existing statutes. In this town, those who dissent from the established church have places of worship erected for the celebration of their respective services, and in the enumeration thereof we shall commence with the

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

Their meeting house is situated on the North Brink, and is correspondent with the primitive simplicity of the body. They consider that true spiritual worship

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consists in communion of soul with the Creator, not interrupted by ceremonial ordinances or religious observances, originating in the invention or contrivance of men. In the burial ground adjoining to this meeting house is a grave, the edging with which it is surrounded is in the shape of a coffin, planted with box, kept and clipped in the neatest order, with the initials 'J. S.' and the word and figures 'aged 88—1742,' formed also in the box, planted over the body there interred, which is said to have been that of 'Jane Stuart,' a descendant from the royal family of that name. There is also a monumental stone to the memory of John Hancock, who died in 1751, aged 77.

METHODISTS.

The term Methodist has been indiscriminately applied to dissenters in general, and to persons of every denomination, who manifest a more than ordinary degree of personal religion. There is, however, a body of professing christians to which the name properly belongs. The Methodist society was first founded in 1729; Mr. John Wesley, then a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, with his brother and two others, set apart some evenings in the week for reading the Greek Testament, conversation and prayer. Others soon afterwards joined them, when they formed rules for the regulation of their time and studies, for reading the scriptures, and self examination, and thus obtained the name of "Methodists," from the exact regularity of their lives. The Wesleyan Methodists, as they are now called, were first formed into a society in 1738, after Mr. Wesley's return from America, where he went to preach the gospel to the Indians. Wesley

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professed the doctrine of Arminius, whilst Whitfield declared his full assent to the doctrines of Calvin. This difference of sentiment between these two eminent men caused a separation, and their followers continue to be divided to this day. The Methodists maintain, that by virtue of the blood of Jesus and the operations of the Holy Spirit, it is their privilege to arrive at that maturity in grace, and participation of the Divine nature, which excludes sin from the heart, and fills it with perfect love to God and men.* The following is a statement of the numbers in their society in July 1826, extracted from the minutes of conference:

In Great Britain	191,217
Ireland	23,800
West Indies and other foreign stations	27,442
America	240,924
Total number in the Methodist societies	483,383

Their travelling preachers amount to about 650. The Methodist Chapel at Wisbech stands in the Crescent, it is well fitted up with pews, and will contain about 550 persons. It was erected in the year 1803.

THE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL,

situated on the castle premises, and forming nearly one whole side of the avenue called Castle Square, leading into the Crescent, is a neat and commodious building, about fifty-four feet long, by thirty-four wide, and capable, in its present state, of accommodating nearly

* Jones' Religious Opinions.

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five hundred persons. It was erected in the year 1818, by the united exertions of a few families in the town and neighbourhood of the Independent denomination, and is, together with the house adjoining, built for the use of the officiating minister, secured to protestant dissenters of that faith and order. The whole cost of this property, which is freehold, amounted to upwards of £2000.

The Independents are a sect of protestants, so called from their maintaining that each congregation of christians, which meet in one house for public worship, is a complete church; has sufficient power to act and perform every thing relating to religious government within itself, and is in no respect accountable to other churches. The first Independent or Congregational church in England was established in the year 1616. Mr. John Robinson, a Norfolk divine, is considered as their founder. The religious tenets maintained in this section of the christian world are, in substance, the same with those of the venerable assembly of divines which met at Westminster in 1643, in the reign of Charles I. and in general accordance with the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, except on those points which relate to ecclesiastical polity and discipline. The Rev. William Holmes is the present minister, whose qualifications for his office as a man and a christian are highly respectable.

BAPTIST CHAPEL.

The General Baptist society in this town appears to have originated during the time of the protectorate: at least it is certain that in that period, a congregation of

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this denomination existed in Wisbech.* Their former meeting house, situate in Place's Yard, was built in 1797. A Mr. Henry Place, from whom, probably, the name was derived, accommodated them with the ground.† Their present chapel in Ely Place was erected in 1803, and can accommodate from four hundred to five hundred persons. They are denominated *General* from their belief in general redemption, or that Christ died for all men, and not, as is supposed by the advocates for *Particular* redemption, for only a certain part. The late Mr. Joseph Proud, eminent as a minister and a writer among the followers of Baron Swedenborg, was son of one of the former ministers of this society. From 1783 to 1799, when he removed to Hinckley, Mr. J. Freestone was their minister. He is known as the pious author of "Reasons for not being a Socinian," "Encouragements for Travellers to Zion," "Directions for "Young Ministers," and several other useful publications. He died at Hinckley in 1819. Their present minister is the Rev. Joseph Jarrom, whose services among them commenced in 1802. This gentleman superintends an establishment, belonging to the denomination, for educating young men for the ministry. A benevolent institution was established by this congregation in the year 1818, called "The Christian Fund," for providing for the labouring classes in time of sickness.

THE JOHNSONIANS

are a body united in the tenets of the Baptist church, and have a place for worship in Ship Street, or, as it has

* General Baptist History, vol. 1. p. 138—141.

† The Society's Church Book.

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of late been called, Hill Street. Their origin is recent, and may be dated from a few individuals withdrawing from the congregational meeting in Deadman's Lane, in Wisbech. The separation took place in November 1792. Mr. Fisher, of Norwich, was then invited to take the pastoral charge, which he accepted. The present chapel was first used for public worship on 1st December 1793. Mr. Fisher was ordained over the people in January 1794, since which the congregation is said to have greatly increased. He died in April 1803, when the church and congregation earnestly solicited Mr. Dawbarn to take the pastoral care, who, after many requests, and with the unanimous desire of the church, consented, and was ordained over the people April 1804, and has continued ever since to officiate and administer the several ordinances. They derive their name or title from Mr. John Johnson, who was for many years pastor of a Baptist church in Liverpool, and died at a very advanced age, about forty years ago. He published several volumes to explain and defend his sentiments. There are but few societies of this denomination. They are to be found in London, Liverpool, Norwich, Wisbech, Newark, &c. but none of their congregations are numerous.

THE PRESBYTERIANS

used to have a place of worship on the northern side of Ship Lane, beyond the old grammar school. The last minister was a Mr. M'Miller, at whose ordination, that eminent dissenting divine, Dr. Doddridge, attended at Wisbech, and preached a sermon on the occasion, which was afterwards printed. Mr. M'Miller was buried in Wisbech church yard. The number of this description

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of dissenters being small, no other minister succeeded him, and by degrees the building falling into decay, the premises were sold, with the ground whereon the same stood, which is now occupied by Mr. James Harrison. The late Thomas Cox, esq. was one of the trustees of the chapel.

THE SOCINIANS

have a chapel in Deadman's Lane. Socinus, who died in 1604, is generally considered as the founder of this denomination, and from him they derive their name. Modern Socinians, being strenuous advocates for the Divine unity, now claim the appellation of Unitarians. They were but little known in England until the reign of Charles I. They acquired some distinction from the writings and influence of Dr. Priestley and his associates, but are now said to be on the decline.* They reject the doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin, Atonement, &c.

It is proper to observe, that the dissenting bodies have several institutions of a charitable and religious nature in connexion with them, such as Sunday Schools, Missionary Societies, the Bethel Union, Friendly Societies, &c. all which are well supported, and do credit to their zeal.

A District Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge

has been instituted at Wisbech, but before we particularize its establishment, we will refer to the origin of

* Jones' Religious Opinions.

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this society. Early in the year 1699,* a few individuals of elevated station and eminent piety, both among the clergy and laity, began to meet together in a voluntary society, and as such, with unanimity and zeal, and with numbers gradually increasing, they exerted themselves to advance the knowledge of true religion, by such methods as appeared to them most conducive to that end. The object of the society is expressed by its name—"For "promoting Christian Knowledge" generally throughout the world, consisting partly of subscribing, and partly of corresponding members; the former contributing towards the support of the expenses of the institution, and the latter, of such persons in Great Britain and Ireland, and other parts of the world, as are invited to correspond with the society, to acquaint them with the state of religion.

About the middle of the year 1701, at their instance, a charter was obtained from his majesty king William III., by which many of the then subscribing and corresponding members, with several other persons of distinction in church and state, were incorporated by the name of "the Society for the Propagating of the "Gospel in Foreign Parts," for the better carrying on of that branch of the society's design which related to the colonies beyond the seas, belonging to the united kingdom. The members, however, of the voluntary society, still continued, in that capacity, to prosecute

* The first meeting took place 8th March 1698-99, at which were present, the right honourable lord Guildford, Sir Humphrey Mackworth, Mr. Justice Hook, Dr. Bray, Colonel Chichester, &c. In a short period, they were joined by seven bishops, dean Stanhope, Robert Nelson, esq. author of the Companion for Fasts and Festivals, and many other eminent characters.

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their benevolent design *at home*. The education of youth in the principles of the Christian religion, and in habits of useful industry, has ever been an object of the society's special regard and concern. To disperse the holy scriptures, the liturgy, and many pious and judicious works and tracts, has been another principal branch of its design. In 1709, the society circulated copies of a new edition of the Welch common prayer book; and in 1714, a new impression of the Welch bible was printed; then followed Irish and Mank's impressions. From a very early period, the spiritual necessities of the army and navy have constituted one important department of the society's concerns: copies of the holy scriptures and other books having frequently been granted to both those great national establishments. The religious wants of the poor and afflicted in hospitals, prisons, workhouses, and other public institutions, have been attended to, and packets of books sent to every county gaol. The sources from which the society was enabled to carry on these and other important and extensive designs, have been annual subscriptions, with legacies * and occasional donations. The proceedings of the diocesan and district committees are regulated according to the transactions of the original society. Their objects are to increase its influence and means of circulating religious books; to invite all persons in a

* Some of the legacies are as follows: the first was a generous one of £ 4,000. bequeathed by a lady in 1728; after that, several legacies from £ 1,000. to £ 100.; and in 1791, Peter, lord Vryhouven, in Holland, died in London, leaving two-thirds of the residue of his personal property, which amounted to £ 27,331. 4s. 2d. in the three, four, and five per cent. stocks. And by a decree of the court of chancery in 1805, transfers were made of the residue of the personal estate of the Rev. Richard Canning, of Ipswich, of £ 9,946. 4s. 11d. stock.

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district, whether clergy or laity, to become subscribers, with a contribution annually of not less than one guinea; to promote parochial collections for the uses of the society, and supply of books to the district; to afford members a facility of obtaining books upon favourable terms, and to ascertain the wants of the several parts of each district. Of the diocesan committee of Ely the lord bishop is president.* At the report of the diocesan committee, held at Cambridge 15th December 1826, it was announced that the sub-committee had distributed in the course of that year, 324 bibles, 344 testaments, 535 prayer books, and 5,011 tracts. If we take a view of the inhabitants of the earth, it will be shewn that there remains still a vast field for exertion lying open to Christian benevolence, ere the blessings of civilization, mental improvement, rational liberty, and Christianity, are fully communicated to the Pagan and Mahometan world. It is said, that the number of inhabitants on the whole earth at one time may be estimated at 820,000,000, which, with regard to religion, may be calculated as follows:

Pagans		490,000,000
Mahometans		130,000,000
		620,000,000
Roman Catholics	100,000,000	
Protestants	43,000,000	
Greeks and Armenians	50,000,000	
Jews	7,000,000	
		200,000,000
		820,000,000

* Of the district committee for the deanery of Wisbech, established there in the year 1813, the Rev. J. Jackson is secretary, who is empowered to receive benefactions or annual subscriptions.

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So that it appears there are more than four Pagans or Mahometans to one Christian, and only one Protestant to seventeen of all other denominations; and there are six hundred and twenty millions of our fellow men, ignorant of the true God, and of his will as revealed in the holy scriptures. A second branch of the design of the venerable society for promoting Christian knowledge has been to diffuse the blessings of Christianity, by the establishment and support of religious missions, in extending its regard to the destitute condition of the natives of Africa, and on a more enlarged scale towards those of Asia, by the name of

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

This society possesses great facilities in making known the Gospel, and a most judicious zeal has always marked its operation. A society in aid of this institution was last year established at Cambridge, and the Rev. R. J. King, who has for many years been the respected assistant and curate to Dr. Jobson, has employed his influence in exciting at Wisbech that interest in others which he feels himself in promoting its objects. Of this society, at Cambridge, his royal highness the duke of Gloucester, chancellor of the university, is patron; the right honorable the earl of Hardwicke, lord lieutenant of the county, and the most noble John Henry duke of Rutland, vice patrons, and the right reverend the lord bishop of Ely, president. By the report of the committee, there are at present one hundred and three missionaries, and one hundred and thirteen schoolmasters, employed in the service of the incorporated society, and it is proposed to add very considerably to their number. The income of the society, arising from every available source, cannot

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be estimated at more than £23,000. per annum, while its annual expenditure amounts to £27,000. Still the society continues to enlarge the sphere of its operation, in the full assurance that the deficiencies will be supplied by the liberality of the British nation.

THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

In the year 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was established, and recommended to public patronage and support. Lord Teignmouth, a nobleman of distinguished manners, talents, and virtues, was appointed president. Various auxiliary societies, following the example of the parent society, were established in most of the considerable towns in the united kingdom. An earnest desire was felt by many inhabitants of this town to form an auxiliary society for the isle of Ely: their wishes were communicated to the earl of Hardwicke, the lord lieutenant of the county, who readily promised to give the society his support, and his lordship accordingly attended a public meeting at Wisbech in the month of May 1813, when he condescended to accept the office of president; the meeting was most numerously attended, and several animated speeches delivered. From that period, the society has continued, and seems to acquire additional vigour. The distribution, from the formation to the year 1826, makes a general total of 6,755 bibles and testaments circulated by the society from the commencement of its labours. The president and vice-presidents are at this time as follows:

PRESIDENT,

The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Hardwicke.

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VICE-PRESIDENTS,

The Hon. and Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Kildare.
The Rt. Hon. Lord Francis Godolphin Osborne, M.P.
The Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount Milton, M.P.
The Rev. R. Chatfield, LL.D.
Thomas Clarkson, Esq. Playford Hall, Suffolk.
The Rev. George King, Prebendary of Ely.
William Dunn Gardner, Esq. of Chatteris.
The Rev. Richard Dods, Rector of Fleet.
William Watson, Esq. High Bailiff of the Isle of Ely.
Jonathan Peckover, Esq. of Wisbech.

COURT OF REQUESTS.

An act of parliament was obtained in the year 1748, for establishing such court for the isle of Ely, for the recovery of small debts under forty shillings, which act was obtained through the exertions of a former vicar, Dr. Warren, afterwards bishop of Bangor. Commissioners are appointed, and sit at Wisbech the second Friday in every month. These courts, though they have some conveniences, are not approved by all, as the basis of the decisions is laid on wrong principles, the interested oath of the plaintiff being decisive, and the defendant being called on to prove perjury, or in other words, to prove a negative, which is an absurdity. At this time there is a bill before parliament "for preventing "Delays and Expenses in the Proceedings of County "Courts, and for the easy and more speedy Recovery of "Small Debts in England and Wales," which, it is conceived, will be attended with general utility, by taking cognizance of all actions of debt, which shall not exceed £10.

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A LITERARY SOCIETY

was established in the town in the year 1781. The subscribers are about eighty-four. A room is appropriated for reading at the house of Mr. Henry Leach, the librarian. Every person, on being admitted into the society, pays £3. 3s. as his right to a share in the library, besides the sum of £1. 1s. as an annual subscription. The library consists of more than 2,500 volumes. A president is annually elected, which appointment has been held for twenty-one years by the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, to whom the subscribers at large are indebted for his indefatigable exertions, and to whose attention to the library, it is a satisfaction to bear a grateful testimony.* The collection of books is constantly receiving augmentation by publications of merit in the various departments of literature and science.

* This respected gentleman, having removed from Wisbech, declined the office for which he was so well qualified, when the following resolution was entered at the annual meeting on 3d August 1826: "Resolved, "that this meeting, while they regret the retirement of the Rev. J. "Jackson from the office of president of this institution, feel a pleasure "in recording their unanimous and most cordial thanks to him for his "long, able, and zealous attention to the interest and prosperity of the "society, and for his uniform courtesy to the different members:"—and William Watson, F.A.S. was nominated president in his room for the year ensuing. This society originated at a private meeting of a few friends at the house of Jonathan Peckover, esq. before mentioned, whose name is too well known and respected in Wisbech and its neighbourhood to need any eulogium, either upon his private virtues, or for the patronage he affords to scientific pursuits. The compiler has been favoured with the original note which led to this institution, conveying an invitation to certain gentlemen to meet at the Rose and Crown inn, for the purpose of establishing a well chosen library, on a permanent and increasing plan, dated 29th March 1781, and signed by the following gentlemen:

"Thomas Sheepshanks, John Hancock,
"Mary Hutchinson, Jonathan Peckover"

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THE BANK

at Wisbech is conducted by Messrs. Gurneys and Peckovers, a most respectable firm, who have acquired and long retained what they justly merit,—the highest degree of commercial confidence and respectability, both in the town and neighbourhood; their bills are made payable at the house of Messrs. Barclay, Tritton, and Co. London.

THE SEMINARIES

are numerous, besides the grammar school, so that ignorance cannot be said to be fostered by this part of the community. The greatest facilities are, in fact, given to the acquisition of knowledge among all classes, and the instructors of youth are held in due estimation, as among the most useful members of society.

ASSEMBLIES

are held in the winter season at the Rose and Crown inn, which has been a place of public reception and entertainment for nearly four hundred years. It was originally known by the sign of the Swan,* and afterwards of the Horn, a figure of which is still to be seen on one of the outbuildings, erected in 1601.

THE THEATRE

is situated nearly in the centre of the town, and is well adapted for the purpose. It was built in the year 1793,

* See deed, dated 17th August 1471, p. 297.

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previous to which, a building in Pickard's Lane, now belonging to Jonathan Peckover, esq. since converted into a barn, was used for theatrical purposes. A large building also, on the Sutton road, was afterwards used for the like purpose, previous to the present erection in Deadman's Lane. The very respectable manager, Mr. Robertson, pays his annual visit to the inhabitants in the spring season.

THE POST OFFICE

is situated in a central situation in Hill Street, and shuts every day at four P.M. but the bags are not closed until half-past four. The mail, when not retarded by the weather, arrives from the south about eight in the morning, every day except Monday, and no post sets out for the south on Saturday. The mail is at present brought from Huntingdon by a cart.*

* The town possesses convenient modes of travelling.—Coaches go daily to London in twelve hours. The *Defiance* leaves Wisbech every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday morning at seven A.M. and the *Day*, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning at the like hour, the former from the New Inn, and the latter from the White Hart. The time for leaving London is eight o'clock, the *Defiance* from the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, and the *Day* from the Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill. Two coaches also pass daily through Wisbech to and from Norwich and Stamford; a branch from which is established to Boston. By these conveyances a convenient communication is formed between the eastern and northern districts of the kingdom. The fares are as follow;—

	INSIDE.	OUTSIDE.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
From Wisbech to London	1 16 0	1 0 0
Norwich	1 4 0	0 15 0
Stamford	0 16 0	0 10 0

A packet, called the Nene Packet, belonging to Messrs. Simpson and Co. Peterborough, arrives from Peterborough every Tuesday and Friday, and

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THE INNS,

of which there are four, are well conducted. The Rose and Crown and the White Hart are both good posting houses. Also the White Lion and the Vine inns, besides several other houses, which, varying in their accommodations, are adapted to all ranks and descriptions of travellers.

THE POLICE

of the town may be said to be well regulated. The magistrates are appointed by the lord bishop, the custos rotulorum, and are justices within the isle. Those acting for the Wisbech division meet for the transaction of public business on every Wednesday and Saturday, at the new town hall, and sit from twelve to three on each of those days, to inquire into and determine respecting offences, as well as to hear and adjust differences; and it may truly be said that it is their wish to be looked upon with, and to uphold, a feeling of respect amongst their neighbours, by preserving the peace between the several classes of society.* Sessions are held every quarter, at Wisbech and Ely alternately, on the Wednesday in the usual week appointed for Sessions; and assizes are held for the isle twice a year,† at which

returns, from Wisbech on Wednesday and Sunday mornings, taking passengers and goods. It is commodiously fitted up, and the fares are moderate, being 2s. 6d. each person, from Wisbech to Peterborough, in the cabin, and 3s. 6d. in the fore part of the vessel.

* The present acting magistrates at Wisbech are the Rev. Abraham Jobson, D.D. Robert Hardwicke, esq. M.D. William Watson, esq. F.A.S. the Rev. William Hardwicke, M.A. and Henry James Nicholls, esq.

† In queen Elizabeth's time, it seems assizes were held twice a year at Ely, and once at Wisbech. *Cole's MSS.*

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the chief justice, appointed by the lord of the franchise, presides. Counsel attend from the Norfolk circuit, both at the assizes and sessions.

HOT AND COLD SALT WATER BATHS.

A subscription, supported with considerable spirit, was last year entered into for the establishment of baths of the above description, for the accommodation of the inhabitants. The building, which is a neat and commodious structure, is already finished, and it is hoped the baths will contribute in no small degree to the health, comfort, and convenience of the town and neighbourhood. The expense was about £700., raised by shares of £10. each.

MANUFACTURES.

There are none carried on to any extent in Wisbech, though cordage for the shipping is made in considerable quantities. Property being minutely divided, few persons hold any extensive possessions, but there is a very numerous and respectable class of independent proprietors.

The Lighting and Watching of the Town, with the Market and Fairs.

Wisbech is well lighted* and watched, without any expense to the inhabitants, the charge being paid out

* In the year 1417, under the reign of Henry V., the streets of London were first lighted. A decree of the council commanded, that at the door of every house in the city a lighted candle should every evening be placed in a lantern. In this decree originated the present brilliant illumination of our streets. The gas light was introduced about the year 1814.

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of the funds of the capital burgesses. As early as the year 1708, watchmen were appointed. The cleansing of the town, so far as regards the draining of the waste water, is performed by covered sewers communicating with the river, the streets having channels for the passage of the water into them: and it is needless to remark that scavengers are employed to sweep the streets, which are in general kept very neat. The town is supplied with water from wells, rain-water cisterns, and the river. It has a most plentiful market on Saturdays. There are several fairs, viz. on Saturday before Palm Sunday and Saturday before Lady-day, for hemp and flax, which continue to be held every six weeks for a certain period, but they may be merely considered as so many larger markets. A very considerable horse fair is held on the Wednesday before Whit Sunday, which is still attended by numerous London dealers, but not so well supported by them of late years, since the day of the horse shew was altered, which is attributed to other fairs in the neighbourhood clashing therewith. A very important fair for cattle is held on the 12th of August, to which it has been known that 3000 head of cattle have been brought. There is a variety of excellent shops in the town, for the sale of all descriptions of articles. The tradesmen are not only attentive, civil, and industrious, but of a most respectable character; they may not abound with sumptuous wealth, as some of the metropolitans, but all live in a happy, reputable, and creditable manner. The trade of the town increases with the improved state of the country, and the consequent augmentation of produce and consumption. There are several public pumps kept in order by the capital burgesses, for the general use and benefit of the inhabitants; amongst

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others, is one at a place called the Low, leading from the North Brink into Pickard's Lane, where formerly stood a cross called White Cross; the water supplied by this pump is considered to have some medicinal qualities, and is particularly recommended in cases of weak eyes.

POPULATION.

The first census recorded to have been taken was in the latter end of the seventeenth century, about 1676, when the number of inhabitants in Wisbech appeared to be 1705. Upon an account taken in the year 1801 of the population of England and Wales, in pursuance of an act of parliament passed for that purpose, the numbers returned in Wisbech were 4710,* and 1008 inhabited houses. In 1811 there were 1237 houses and 5309 inhabitants. In the year 1821 the return made was 1418 houses and 6515 inhabitants, viz. males 3017, females 3498, having increased nearly 2000 in twenty years. It may not be improper to notice the mode of taking the census in 1821, which was different from that observed on former occasions. The actual population at the day appointed by the act for that purpose was taken of every place in the kingdom, and consequently the strangers in Wisbech on that day were included in the account, and the inhabitants absent on that day were excluded. The town on this occasion was divided into nine districts, and traversed by the churchwardens and overseers, sidesmen, and such other inhabitants as volunteered their services, to the number, in the whole,

* Viz. 2,124 males, 2,586 females,—total, 4,710. By a record kept in the last century, it appeared that there were fifty-two instances of longevity in persons resident in Wisbech between the ages of 80 and 94.

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of eighteen, viz. two for each district, and the whole was thus completed agreeably to the directions of government. At the last census, forty persons were between the ages of 80 and 90, and three from 90 to 100, shewing that several have exceeded four score years; and yet many are fearful of entering the fens of Cambridgeshire, lest the Marsh Miasma should shorten their lives.* The Marsh Miasma above mentioned induces the compiler to trespass, by noticing a recent publication of Dr. Brown's, of Boston, in Lincolnshire, on "Intermittent "Fevers;" which, he very properly says, are not of so frequent occurrence as they were half or a quarter of a century ago; an observation made not only by the older inhabitants, but by the medical practitioners: the cause of which is naturally to be attributed to the great improvements effected in the drainage of the country, by the increase of a fertile and productive soil, although it is acknowledged that the ague still exists; but, prior to such improvements, few families escaped having their inmates labouring under the ague, even in some instances throughout the year. In employing a remedy for the cure of such intermittents, the bark has been heretofore

* Several of the abbots, who presided over the religious houses in this low country, attained remarkable periods of longevity. In the year 973, it is recorded that five monks were alive in Croyland abbey, the youngest of whom was 113 years old; the long protracted lives of so many of its members is a matter truly astonishing. Of eight monks massacred by the Danes in 870, two were centenaries. *Gough's Appendix.* In the population returns in 1821 for the whole kingdom, there were 313 people living who had attained the age of 100 years, viz. 106 males and 207 females. The enumeration of the population of Wisbech here made is of course independent of the considerable increase in New Walsoken, which may be called a suburb of the town, though in a different parish. For the general returns of the population of the isle of Ely and county of Cambridge, see 'Appendix.'

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considered to give relief, and the result warranted perseverance, but advocates have lately come forward in support of the *sulphate of quinine*, which seems to place the superior efficacy of that substance in this disease beyond a question. Dr. Brown gives several cases to illustrate the advantage of this medicine, which will, he says, by perseverance, repel and ultimately subdue the disease treated of.

The amusement of horse racing was known in England in early times, and the town of Wisbech could once boast of its

RACES,

which have now been discontinued for many years. The race ground or course was about two miles and a half from the town, on a piece of open common, which belonged to the parish of Emneth, on the road to Downham. In the year 1775, the following horses ran for a purse of £50.

Mr. Dymoke's *Sparkler*, 5 years old, 8st. 8lbs. 1
Mr. Clarke's *Daphne*, ditto 2
Lord Clermont's *Bellissimo*, ditto 3
Mr. Hubbert's *Pagan*, ditto..... 4 Dist.

Bellissimo fell down dead in the second heat, and Daphne died soon afterwards. The last races were held in the year 1780.

The name of Baretti (who published his travels into several countries) is well known. He came to London in 1750, and after residing there ten years, set out in 1760, through Spain and Portugal, for Italy. In his

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journey, he followed the directions of Dr. Johnson, in taking notice of whatever scenes passed before his eyes, and thus produced a very amusing performance. This gentleman afterwards returned to England, and in his rambles in the year 1778 or 1779, amongst other places, visited Wisbech, and took up his residence with one of the principal families, then residing at the castle, at the time of the race week. He afterwards published a relation of his visits at different places in a series of letters, entitled, "Lettere Familiari de Guiseppe Baretti," in which appears a description of his Wisbech visit as follows:*

"*Letter* 11*th, to Angiolo Querini.*

"Behold me now returned to London after an absence of fifteen or sixteen days, which I passed in a town called Wisbech, distant rather more than one hundred miles. Now, most excellent Signor Angiolo, I will relate to your excellence what I have been doing during the time of my short visit from the metropolis, to comply with an invitation from a gentleman of that town, whom I knew, and contracted a friendship with at Vicenza.

"Setting out for this purpose, and travelling *one whole day and a short part of the night*, without stopping, I alighted safe and well at his house, which, to speak by parenthesis, is not a palace to make a figure on our Grand Canal, but only a small, snug house, convenient, neat, and abounding in comforts, and every

* The compiler considers himself very highly indebted to the kindness of a young lady of Wisbech, who presented him with this translation.

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thing necessary in private life; that is to say, a habitation exactly the reverse of those of our Cornari, and Morosini, and Pesari, and Pisani, and many others, which overflow with magnificent and costly furniture, but are in dirty and bad condition, totally unprovided with comforts.

"Wisbech I was tired with in less than the first week, because my host is a man of a somewhat melancholy, rather than a cheerful disposition, and he has a mother who likes him to be in his rooms reading the bible; neither did I see any others in these seven days, except a fat priest, who takes great care to eat and drink, and but little to unfold his literary powers. Few neighbours and inhabitants of the place came to call, although they were quickly informed of the arrival of a stranger, probably because they are not accustomed to pay certain attentions, as in our small places; or perhaps the habitual taciturnity of my host alone kept every person at a distance from his house.

"However that might be, the week which followed made ample amends for the dulness of the first, because there were horse races, and the theatre, and public balls, and public suppers and assemblies, and walks and bustle without end: but I will relate every thing in order.

"Not having left London since I went thither, I had never had an opportunity of witnessing one of the numerous horse races which are held in so many places in this kingdom. Now I have seen those of Wisbech, and though I am told they are some of the least considerable, yet I am so much pleased with them, that I will attempt a description.

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" Figure to yourself, then, Signor Angiolo, a tract of land, level and barren, distant about *two musket shots* from the town, and a mile or rather more in circuit. The horses which are to run are stationed at the starting post: on each side of the place from whence the course is to begin, is erected a scaffolding of timber, twelve or fourteen feet high, large enough to contain six hundred and more persons. Upon one of these scaffoldings stand the ladies, as upon the other are the gentlemen, who assemble to see the sight; for a place in either of these a small sum of money is paid, and no man ascends the stand of the ladies, unless a sign be made to him by one of them. Immediately after dinner, that is to say, at two hours after *None*,* every one hastens towards this place, some in carriages, some on horseback, and others on foot. At a stated time, the horses, with the jockies on their backs, start together, and in little more than the space of six minutes, they run, or rather fly, three times round this circuit, so that they run three miles in less than six minutes, without being allowed an instant to breathe in, and with an impetuosity which cannot be conceived by those who have never seen horses strive in this manner, as was my case.

" The first course finished, these noble animals have a good hour to rest, and many men are busily employed in this hour to dry and rub them well, and in much haste, which enables them to run a second time; and then a third, after another interval of an hour; and the

* *Nona*, Italian. None, the fifth of the seven canonical hours. *Baretti's Dictionary*. None, or the ninth hour, is the last of the lesser hours, that is said before vespers, and answers to three o'clock in the afternoon. *Chambers' Dictionary*. See note in p. 86.

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horse which has shewn the most speed wins the prize, which amounts to one hundred guineas; so the proprietor of the best horse pockets this money, and the others scratch their heads, and curse their bad luck.

"These races are regulated by certain laws, which they say would make an entire volume, were they collected and printed, and probably they are printed, but of this I neglected to inform myself. By a rule of these laws, the horses are exactly measured before they go out of their stalls, and the jockies are weighed, as they must be of the prescribed weight, and conform in other respects, before they start from the post, and thus regulating the measure to the weight, and the weight to the measure, by a certain arithmetic of theirs, of which I do not understand a cipher, the man and horse of one proprietor has not the least advantage over the man and horse of another, because if one jockey is lighter than another, or one horse higher than another, the difference is made up by certain leaden weights, which are placed in the girdle of the jockies.

"What an extremely fine sight it is to behold how these jockies are nailed upon their saddles, and how desperately they spur and whip! And these capital horses go with such an impetuosity, that you would swear they did it only for the honor of victory, quite insensible to the cruel whippings and most cruel blows on the flanks, which they receive all the way. Arrived at the goal, they drop not less with gore than sweat, nor do I in the least exaggerate to you, in saying, that in the drying and rubbing them, they take from the back of each horse not less than a bucket of water.

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"Another thing will appear very strange to you, and that is, the jockies, when they prepare for the races, find a method of reducing themselves so much, that they are little else than bones and skin; and this they effect by walking many nights, up and down, in some mountainous place, with a lantern in their hand, and many jackets and cloaks upon their backs. But the festival over, in which they frequently gain large sums of money, they eat and drink so much, that in a few days they recover their lost flesh, and acquire often still more than they had before their fasting.

"But how shall I find words to express the confusion and the noise made in this place, from the vociferations of the bystanders, and the universal clapping of hands, as applause, and from the running of many thousand persons on foot, and the riders on horseback, within and without the circuit, whilst the racers speed their way. Added to these, the invitations so many make to others to lay wagers. The ladies in this country, if I am well informed, are ashamed to pass for lovers of play, but there, they do not know how to restrain themselves, and resist the general mania of betting, and thus they wager amongst each other for a pot of coffee, so many pounds of tea, chocolate, or some other little thing; but it is done in a different manner by the men, many of whom bet round sums of money, by which they are at once either enriched or impoverished, each shaking in the air a purse full of gold, or lifting up his hand full of those notes which are called bank bills, each equivalent to the sum expressed upon them.

"The races finish as night approaches, when every one returns to his residence, and there all put on their best

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attire, for they go to the races in dishabille, as the French say, whether gentlemen or ladies, and at an hour of the night they go to the ball, which is held in a public room, where the ladies do not pay on entering. There they begin minuets, as are used in our public balls, and then proceed with so much animation in the country dances, that the gentlemen, as well as the ladies, are quite in a heat. When fatigued with dancing, they are informed that supper is prepared in another large room, and each hastens to sit down at a very long table, composed of many tables of equal width, and placed one next another; there the men sit all in a row on one side, and the ladies all in a row on the other, so that each has his lady opposite to him; and some good priest, or one of the principal gentlemen, in default of a priest, sits at the top of the table, and blesses the victuals with a short prayer, to which all standing reply in chorus, Amen; and then every one eats and drinks, and chats, and laughs, and jokes, all with propriety and infinite modesty. He would be esteemed very clownish, who should offend, however slightly, female ears with any improper discourse, even with the lightest of those equivocations so much in use in our rude Vinezia.

"The agreeable supper over, the whole expense is divided, and all paid by the gentlemen. Then they return to dance or to look on, and when Aurora begins to dawn from the balcony of the east, as the poets fancy, all the party disperse and return home.

"This was my amusement for three days during the second week which I spent in Wisbech, and I may tell you it was very cheerfully passed; and do not be tired of my saying over and over again, that I was much

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pleased with the elegant and most decorous manners of the English, who celebrate these noisy festivals in many parts of their kingdom almost all the year, without foolish flirtations, improper conversations, and without altercations and contentions, which would not perhaps be the case with us, should we adopt the plan of having similar races, and if we had them in every point like theirs, that is to say, with these balls and the suppers afterwards, men and women of various classes mixing together with the familiarity and friendship common here. I cannot say enough of the pleasing manners and elegant conversation, animated and always very modest, of these ladies and gentlemen, whether married or single; each speaks, is silent, smiles, or jokes, or dances, or any thing else, with a grace, sweetness, and a demeanour, which leaves no room for suspicion against their morals; and yet the mirth of each is great, and each does what she is able, to shew herself lively and agreeable, so as to contribute a little to the pleasure and delight of the festival.

"In the days when the horses did not run, the evening was spent in a wretched theatre, where certain poor devils of players represented some comedy or tragedy, very differently from those of London, but which, however, helped to make the time pass agreeably, collecting the company together, and causing perhaps still more laughter in tragedy than in comedy: nor were there wanting small games at cards to fill up a vacuum, without naming the morning and evening walks, which pleased me much, because they were taken with most amiable ladies and girls, into whose favour I succeeded in introducing myself, so that I was permitted to chat with them, and to make use of innocent stratagems, to which, in every country, a stranger has recourse, to

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prove himself not unworthy to be on sociable terms with those whose society he seeks; and thus I passed this whole week without perceiving how it went.

"The races being over, and consequently the numerous company who came to attend them from the neighbourhood having departed, I soon took leave of my host to return, which I did leisurely, stopping in several places by the way. However, if I must tell you the truth, I did not see many objects to attract my observation. In Peterborough, an episcopal city, a few miles distant from Wisbech, is a church, very large, antique, and gothic, in which, among other things, are two mausoleums, or remarkable monuments; one contains the bones of Catherine of Portugal, first wife of Henry VIII. whom he repudiated after many years marriage to espouse Anna Boleyn; the other incloses those of Mary, queen of Scots, whom her rival Elizabeth perfidiously caused, after many years of shameful imprisonment, to be beheaded, more from jealousy of her beauty than of empire. Behind the sanctum sanctorum of this church, there is a large library for the use of the studious in that city. In the church, are perceived remains of sepulchres erected to certain former abbots, because in Peterborough, there was in those days an abbey, famous for its exceeding riches. At the entrance of the church, on the left hand, there is another monument consecrated to the ridiculous memory of a certain man named Scarlet, who died in the time of Cromwell. This Scarlet, as it appears, was many years keeper, or, as they say, sexton of this church, and upon the wall opposite to this monument, there is a picture of his short, spruce figure, with a legend underneath, which informs the reader of a circumstance most important to know, viz. that Mr. Sexton Scarlet,

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on account of his alarming and driving idle and impertinent youths from the church, acquired the surname of bugbear of the babies; and it is certain, that if the picture has been faithfully drawn, the good old man has a countenance to frighten cats, but not to alarm little boys; and the inscription informs us that he died, after having lived ninety-eight years healthy and robust. Do you the same, if you can, my dear Signor Querini, although you are neither small nor ugly, nor a sexton, as this Scarlet was; and if a long story does not displease you, let me know, and you shall not fail of receiving others, before I take my departure from this island. In the mean time, salute for me your brother and nephews, and all friends separately, and let me hear of you and them. Adieu!"

LAND-TAX.

The land-tax in this kingdom succeeded to the place of the ancient fifteenths and subsidies. We meet with the payment of fifteenths as far back as the statute of Magna Charta, in the conclusion of which the parliament grant to the king, for the concessions therein by him made, a fifteenth part of all their moveable goods. In 8th Edward III. (1333) a certain sum was rated on every town, by commission appointed in the chancery for that purpose, in like manner as commissioners now appointed by the several land-tax acts. But as the necessities of government multiplied, and value of things increased, this fifteenth was insufficient for the occasions of the public, and thereupon the number of fifteenths was augmented to two or three fifteenths; which, still proving defective, another and quite different taxation was superadded, namely, a subsidy, which was an aid to

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be levied of every subject of his lands or goods, after the rate of 4*s.* in the pound for lands, and 2*s.* 8*d.* for goods. The fifteenths were certain, but the subsidy was uncertain, and amounted anciently to about £70,000. and a subsidy of the clergy at the same time (including the monasteries) was £20,000. In 8th Elizabeth, a subsidy amounted to £120,000. The way of assessing was, however, irregular, until parliament found it necessary to change the method of taxation, and at length determined that a *certain sum* should be fixed upon the several counties; and in 4th William and Mary, the first land-tax act was passed, which was entitled, "An Act "for granting to their Majesties an Aid of Four Shillings "in the Pound for one Year, for carrying on a vigorous "War against France." Commissioners were appointed in every county, and assessors required to rate every town, and many of the inhabitants rated themselves proportionably for their several parts, to make up the general sum upon the township. This course of taxation continued, and land-tax acts were passed annually, until the 38th George III. (1798) when it was made perpetual, and the sum fixed to be paid in Great Britain is £2,037,627. 9*s.* 0½*d.*, subject to redemption by purchase, on conditions therein set forth. The sum charged upon the town of Wisbech is £633. 8*s.* 8*d.* whereof £182. 14*s.* has been redeemed. The annual amount of assessed taxes, including the North Brink Watch, is £2477. 5*s.*

Particulars relating to the former State of the Streets in the Town.

Improvements at all times go hand in hand with civilization. In the eleventh century, the streets in London were not paved, nor is it quite certain when

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such convenience was first introduced. In 1081, Cheapside was of such soft earth, that when the roof of Bow church was blown off by a violent gale of wind,* four beams, twenty-six feet long, were so deeply buried in the earth, that little more than four feet remained above ground: "for the city of London was not paved, "but a moorish ground."

The houses from the spot where the bridge now stands to High Street, on the side leading to Yorke Row, and in front of Deadman's Lane, were not erected until the protectorate of Cromwell. In the year 1665, there is an order in the town records, that "the market "should be all sufficiently paved and made" by the town-bailiff, but as the materials wherewith it was to be paved are not specified, it is presumed that it was only covered with loose silth, for there are persons living at this time, who recollect the streets being composed of the same sort of soft earth as Cheapside, when planks were laid across the High Street, in the winter season, for the convenience of foot passengers, lest they should be mired in crossing from one side to the other. At such period, there was an open sewer running on the north side of the High Street, with three little bridges over it, at certain distances, and posts by the side for the accommodation of hanging horses thereto. In London, footpaths did not begin to be generally adopted until 1673, and about sixty years afterwards, such improvement extended to Wisbech, which commenced by a pavement

* This appears to have been a most violent tempest; for the London historiographers all agree that many churches and upwards of six hundred houses were blown down, and the tower much damaged, besides the above extraordinary circumstance of the rafters.

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of small cobbles next to the houses; this was followed about ten years after, (1750) by paving the centre of the High Street with large cobble stones, a gutter running in the middle of the street, so that loaded waggons meeting in contact could scarcely pass each other in safety; and the last improvement took place under the paving act.

At the end of High Street, where the engine is kept, next to the Rose and Crown inn, the common sewer remained and was exposed to open view, part only thereof being covered over, of sufficient width for passengers to cross. This covering consisted of flag stones, on which certain steps were raised, with a wall, having a front towards the market-place, about three feet high: on these steps the town crier ascended, and, leaning against this wall, delivered his public notices to the assembled populace, which caused that spot to have the appellation of the "Crying Stone." Such was the state of that part of the town about seventy years since, as related to me by a very respectable old inhabitant,* who has a perfect recollection of the condition of the streets, as above stated. The same person likewise recollects a very old building, situated in a place called the Butcher's Row, which now constitutes part of the open market-place; but at a period when the butchers' shambles were standing, an intervening space was formed between the shambles and the opposite houses on the south-west side of the market-place, which then went by the name of the Butcher's Row. This building, whilst it remained, seemed to shew more of antiquity than any other in the town, from whence, some conjectured that it was built in king John's reign, though with little probability.

* Mr. James Stanroyd, now aged 94 (1827).

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There was, indeed, some rude carved work in front, on wood, which seemed to be a man felling an ox, and other devices, with an inscription in Saxon characters, unintelligible. This building afterwards belonged to Mrs. Elizabeth Wright, a great benefactress to the town,* and was last in the tenure of Bridget Osborn, and being in a very ruinous state, was taken down in 1811, and the ground let on a building lease to Mr. William Bell, a respectable tradesman, who now occupies the same in its modern state, as part of his shop for business. In front of a modern tenement in Timber Market, on the eastern side, there used to be six curious Roman bricks, with raised figures represented upon them in the front. Although consisting of six, they appeared duplicates. Drawings have been taken of them, which will accompany this work: there is no authentic history relative to them; the only account is, that an ancient dwelling, which was destroyed by fire, stood on the site where this modern erection was afterwards made, and in digging the foundation, the six bricks above mentioned were discovered amongst the ruins.

Wisbech, like Stamford, was formerly famous for its annual bull running, which took place on Shrove Tuesday, when the animal was generally let loose from the shop or building before described in Butcher's Row. This cruel practice was abolished about thirty-five years since, principally through the exertions of a very active and intelligent magistrate, then acting in this division.† It has been shewn that the town, for these last thirty years, has

* See title—'Public Charities,' page 326.

† The Rev. Thomas Sheepshanks, A.M. late rector of Wimpole.

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Roman Brick found at Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.

E.Maule del. Printed by P. Sumeau.

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been rapidly increasing in size and importance, as well as in the erection of buildings. But for many years preceding, Wisbech had excited considerable respect from a very notable observer of buildings, who described the houses to be in general handsome; and that the bridge, stretching Rialto-like over a considerable stream, with a row of good houses extending from it and fronting the water, exhibited a Venetian appearance, especially if viewed from the London entrance.* Mr. Medworth, before alluded to,† may be said to have set one of the first examples towards improvement, but nothing has promoted the general benefit of the town, or given a stimulus to the spirit of the inhabitants so much as

The Act for Improving the Town,

which was passed in the year 1810, entitled, "An Act "for establishing a Cattle Market within the Town of "Wisbech, for taking down and removing the Shambles "therein, for paving, cleansing, lighting, and watching "the said Town, and removing Nuisances therein, for "preserving and improving the Port and Harbour of "Wisbech, and for increasing the Duties at the said "Port."

This act has proved most importantly beneficial to Wisbech, and if the future funds are well managed, will be a blessing thereto. In consequence of this act, the streets are now well paved, and a flat pavement of Yorkshire slab is laid upon the sides next to the houses, independent of their being well lighted, kept from obstructions and nuisances, and regularly swept, which

* Coles' MSS. † See page 132.

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gives a very agreeable appearance to the town. The act has now been in existence seventeen years, and ever since the passing thereof, the town has continued to advance in prosperity. The numerous buildings on the roads adjacent to the town, (besides the Crescent, consisting of between fifty and sixty new houses) strongly evince an augmentation of opulence, whilst every vacant space within the town is appropriated to the use of the builder. There are many useful clauses in this act, which provide for the appropriation of the cattle market, the limits of the port, and increase of its tonnage duties, the paving of the streets, which are placed under the direction of the capital burgesses, with the removal of all noisome buildings, and the preventing of future encroachments and projections. The streets called Yorke Row, the Crescent, Church Street, Ely Place, and Market Street, are by this act acknowledged to be private property; but it is to be regretted that they were not placed under its useful regulations. The consequence was, that in wet seasons they were for several years in a very miry condition, but the inhabitants of that part of the town have lately shewn their spirit, by contributing from their private purses a sum sufficient to pave and gravel the whole space, which has added much to the cleanliness and ornament thereof. In perambulating the town, there will be perceived considerable stir and bustle, without any exterior signs of want, and much to please and gratify.

TURNPIKE ROADS.

Safe and easy travelling is now become so conducive to the comfort and economy, not only of the immediate resident, but also of the public generally, that we must

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not omit to give some account of the present state of the highways in this neighbourhood; indeed, no circumstance respecting a town is of more consequence than the state of the roads surrounding it: this is the capital trait which marks the degree of improvement at which a people are arrived. The first act in our statute books relating to highways is in the year 1284, (13th Edward I. stat. ii. c. 5). In the reign of William III., turnpike acts were passed, such as at present, appointing commissioners, authorizing tolls, &c. It is not more than seventy or eighty years ago, since the internal traffic of this country was carried on chiefly by means of pack horses. We are old enough to remember, when some of the first districts in the island, distinguished for their rich cultivation, were so deficient in the state of their roads, that a carriage could scarcely pass along without the greatest difficulty, and all intercourse nearly ceased with the autumnal rains. Roads were then in so wretched a state, that even a waggon was seldom seen upon them. Notice has already been taken* of a petition to parliament in the year 1729, setting forth the almost impassable state of the roads, for "waggons, beasts, "and sheep to London, which were obliged to go over "Wisbech bridge." The first turnpike act in this neighbourhood was passed in the year 1766, for making a road from Chatteris ferry, through Chatteris and March, to Wisbech Saint Peter's, and from thence to Tid Gote, and from Wisbech, through Outwell, to Downham bridge, in the county of Norfolk. When this road approached within four miles of the town of Wisbech, it was carried on the top of a high bank called Waldersea bank, in width less at that time than thirty feet, to pass along which had to many persons the appearance

* See page 281.

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of great danger; this inconvenience is, however, now in a great measure removed, by an addition of twenty feet in width on the surface of the bank, the whole of which is now covered with the durable material of gravel. This laudable and useful work was first proposed and adopted in the year 1817, as a means of relieving the poor, whom want of employment greatly distressed. The parish of Wisbech subscribed a certain sum, and the trustees of the turnpike road advanced an equal sum, and by the judicious use thereof, many industrious men were substantially relieved by being employed in raising and widening this road; besides which, it had this further good effect, that when a person applied for relief under the pretence of scarcity of work, it served as a touchstone to distinguish the justness of his complaint. The poor who are fit for employment ought, as far as possible, to find it for themselves, or have it found for them: maintaining them in idleness is only teaching them to be useless and wicked. Indeed, the poor themselves should consider, that continuing to live upon alms, when they are able wholly or in part to live upon the produce of their own labour, is injuring the community. Industry is an indispensable duty of the poor. The improved width upon Waldersea bank ought to be publicly known to all travellers resorting to Wisbech, as the fears of the most timorous may be now dissipated, nor need any apprehensions of alarm be entertained by reason of the narrow surface of the bank, which has now a width of fifty feet, upon an average, well gravelled and kept in an excellent state along the whole line, besides a raised protecting bank against the steep side thereof. Within the period of about twenty-five years, the mail in the winter months was often obliged to be brought from Guyhirn to Wisbech by a boat, on account of the then intolerable state of the road upon the bank, consisting of a

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silth and clay surface. All the roads in this country used heretofore to be formed of silth, a sort of sand from the sea shore, but that plan has for some time given way to the more durable material of gravel, with which the surface of the whole line of road belonging to this district is now covered, and this has been accomplished by the perseverance of a gentleman, who has deserved and is entitled to the esteem of his neighbours, for the long, valuable, and useful services rendered by him, not only in this instance of the roads, but for his general conduct in the public concerns of this division of the isle.* It will scarcely be believed by those unacquainted with the circumstance, that previous to the year 1810, there was no direct carriage road between Norfolk and the central counties which was not for almost six months in the year impassable; the carts stuck fast in the deep clay, and it was deemed little short of madness to undertake a journey along this tract, except during hard frost. The chief obstacle occurred in the neglected and dangerous avenue between the towns of Wisbech and Thorney. This has now been converted, though at considerable expense, into a safe and excellent road, by the operation of an act for making and maintaining a turnpike road between these two towns, which was passed in the year 1810. The subscriptions were liberal, and the increase of traffic is so enlarged, and the funds so well managed, that the several creditors on the road receive at this time five

* The inhabitants of Wisbech and its neighbourhood endeavoured to testify their approbation of the praise-worthy exertions of this gentleman, Robert Hardwicke, esq. M.D. for his able discharge of a variety of important duties, equally advantageous to the public and honourable to himself, by purchasing a service of plate of the value of one hundred and twenty guineas, which was presented to him at a public meeting at the town-hall in Wisbech, in the month of October 1824.

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per cent. on the original shares,* and have done so for many years. The reproach, therefore, of bad roads is now wearing fast away, and at this period facility of travelling is equal to any that can be found throughout the kingdom, and the effects of good example are already beginning to appear upon the bye and cross roads.

About the year 1811, a general spirit of improvement prevailed in different parts of the country with regard to the amending of the highway and turnpike roads. The honorable house of commons appointed a committee to inquire into their general state, and the result was the recommendation of a better method of road making, and the plan advised by John Loudon M'Adam esq. a magistrate and commissioner of roads in the west of England, became so generally approved, that on adopting his system, a new term became applied, in speaking of the reparation of roads, by describing them as being macadamized. M'Adam's principles are, that a road should not be high in the middle, but ought to be considered as an artificial flooring, at once capable of carrying a great weight, and over which carriages may pass without being on any dangerous slope. Three inches higher in the centre than at the sides, (where there are eighteen feet) are sufficient to allow the water to run off. Every road to be made of broken stone, without any mixture of earth, clay, &c. and nothing

* His grace the duke of Bedford, always desirous of promoting every public good for the country, and who held the right of a toll at each extremity of his lordship of Thorney, voluntarily surrendered up his claim in the most liberal manner to the trustees, as soon as the road became turnpike; thereby rendering an actual benefit to the extent of the amount of toll, which is now hired at £ 263. per annum. The residue of the road from Thorney to Peterborough was previously made turnpike in the year 1792.

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laid upon the clean stone on pretence of binding, as the broken stone will combine by its own angles, and form into a smooth and hard surface; the large stones are recommended to be broken so that none exceed six inches, and the materials to be of an uniform size. Ten inches in thickness of well consolidated materials, he considers equal to carry any thing, and such materials to be broken to the size of six inches; and in cases of an old road, where it had ten inches of materials before, no new ones would be wanted. The extent of revenue throughout the kingdom raised for maintaining roads, he calculated at about a million and a quarter per annum, on the toll revenue, there being 25,000 miles of turnpike road; and he believed the debt then amounted to £7,000,000. in England and Wales. About the year 1818, Mr. M'Adam's plan became generally pursued on all the public roads.

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A CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

OF SEVERAL MISCELLANEOUS OCCURRENCES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE TOWN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

A.D.

1000 About this time the manor of Wisbech was given to the abbot and convent of Ely, by Oswi and Leoflede.

1086 William the Conqueror erected the castle of stone.

1190 A grant of exemption from tolls in fairs and markets throughout England, to the tenants of Wisbech Barton manor, by king Richard I. has been before mentioned,* and in the 12th Henry IV. (A.D. 1411) it was renewed, and the grant confirmed by writ of privy seal in the time of Henry VI. This privilege being afterwards lost, was restored, as collected from that homely verse before mentioned † amongst the monuments, inscribed on a brass plate inserted on the monumental stone of Mr. Nicholas Sandford, who died 8th February 1638.

1216 King John visited Wisbech.

1236 A most violent storm on Martinmas and other following days, when the sea by the violence of the wind inundated this town and the surrounding country.

* See page 134. † See page 267.

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1260 The town of Wisbech, with the castle, &c. said to have been utterly destroyed by a violent inundation of the sea. A few years after this period, there fell such prodigious rains, that the Thames overflowed, and broke down its banks in many places, which occasioned an immense damage, and the fruits of the earth were thereby so destroyed, as to occasion the most excessive dearth, wheat being sold at £6. 8s. the quarter, equal to £60. at present (1827), and the famine reigned horrible and destructive.*

1282 to 1393 Ancient records speak of a manor called Todenham Hall, in Wisbech, held by the family of Todenham in the the 13th and 14th centuries.†

1348 A gallows was erected upon the marsh where a windmill now stands, at the bottom of Timber Market, which was called afterwards Gallows Marsh.

1379 In this year the guild of the Holy Trinity was established at Wisbech.

1380 A house of lepers was standing, near which was a stone cross, in the road from Wisbech to Elm, being the division between the two towns.

1437 This town was visited with a disastrous event, by the decay of the Wisbech Fen Dike, so that the fresh waters made so great a breach, that other portions of the same bank adjoining were also broke, to the danger of destroying the whole country. In Wisbech, 4400 acres of land were overflowed and drowned, besides 4500 acres in Leverington, 1400 acres in Newton, and 2000 acres in Tid.

1469 King John was not the only crowned head who honored this place with a visit, for in this year, his majesty

* History of London.

† Bloomfield's Collectanea. This manor was probably at Wisbech Murrow.

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king Edward IV. going on a pilgrimage to St. Edmundsbury, returned by Walsingham and Lynn, and thence went by Wisbech, with a suite of 200 horse, and proceeded to Crowland. It is extremely probable that king Charles I. was also here in his route from Oxford to the Scots army at Newark, lord Clarendon observing, that he went by many "crooked and bye "ways," to escape the forces of the parliament; it is certain that he was at Downham, twelve miles distant, a walk or passage there still retaining his name.

1480 Bishop Morton this year rebuilt the castle.

1549 Was remarkable in Wisbech, as the year in which the first charter of incorporation by Edward VI. was granted, on the suppression of the guild of the Holy Trinity.

1554 After the death of this excellent young king, popery was again established for a season. The inhumanity of the Romish church had consigned many men conspicuous for their character or station to the flames, but the persecutors were not contented with those victims, for they sent artificers and husbandmen, women and boys, to the stake; and it is with regret we have to state, that between the years 1554 and 1559, two persons of the names of William Wolsey and Robert Piggott, inhabitants of Wisbech, were, after a long confinement at Ely, burnt at Wisbech. It is to be observed of the martyrs in humble life, that they suffered not for obtruding their belief, but for refusing to renounce it.

1560 About this period, the new market-place was raised by soil brought from the river bank, between Crabbe Marsh Gate and Elm Leam.

1570 A great flood happened, which did incredible damage at Yarmouth, *Wisbitch*, Lynn, and other places. A violent snow began ten days before Christmas, which increased to such a depth in the Christmas holidays, that the

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like had not before been known, and continued until Candlemas, when the thaw began.*

1571 The sea banks had been previously presented by the court of sewers to be in a decayed condition, but before any reparation could take place, the eastern coast was, in October in this year, visited by a violent storm of wind and rain, so that the banks were unable to withstand the tempest; Leverington and Newton were overflowed, and Wisbech and its neighbourhood flooded some feet deep. Holinshed† presents a doleful picture of the devastating effects of this flood: "The sea broke "in," he says, "between Wisbech and Walsoken, and "at the Cross Keies, drowning Tilneie and Old Lin, "Saint Marie, Teding Saint Marie, Tid Saint John, "Wauple, Walton, Walsoken, Emnie, Jarmans, and "Stow Bridge, all being in the space of ten miles: "these towns and villages were overflown, that is to say, "Wisbech, Guihorne, Parson Drove, and Hobhouse. This "Hobhouse being an almshouse, and the water breaking "down the walls of it, the wind blew the clothes off "from the bed of a poore man and his wife, who being "cold, awaked, and suddenly stepped out of his bed "to reach up his clothes, and slipt up to the bellie in "water, and then he thinking himself to be in danger, "(as he was indeed) and knowing the best waie to "escape the danger of the water, he took his wife on "his necke, and carried her away, and so were both "saved. At the same time, in Wisbech, a garden or "tennis place, and a bowling allie walled about with "bricke, worth £20. by the year to the owner, was "quite destroyed by the water.

* Blomefield's History of Norfolk.

† Holinshed's Chronicle, vol. iii. p. 1213.

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"Master Thimblebie lost 220 sheep; Master Dimoke "lost 400 sheep, with several others, so that, by esti- "mation, 20,000 cattle one and other were lost. Bourne "was overflowed into the midway of the height of the "church.

"Also Holland, Leverington, Newton Chappel in the "Sea, Long Sutton, and Holbich were overflown, and "in this country also were great loss of cattle."

All Marshland was drowned by the sea waters; there were not ten rods of the whole sea bank from Old or West Lynn to Magdalen bridge.*

Holinshed also mentions, that at St. Ives, boats were rowed over the church-yard wall, two yards high, without touching it.

1583 In this year, a new wooden bridge at Wisbech was built over the river.

1584 Thomas Watson, bishop of Lincoln, died in confinement here, and was buried in an obscure manner.†

1587 The plague broke out in Wisbech, when the town was divided into ten wards; and in the following year, Wisbech (like the metropolis after a similar disaster) was visited by a fire, which broke out in the Old Market.

1588 The town does not appear to have materially suffered from its late disasters, as the inhabitants cheerfully came forward to raise contributions to assist in repelling the Spanish armada, and the names of William Sturmyn, William Scotred, Robert Girdon, James Sallibank, Robert Lyne, Robert Cooper, and Arthur Dalton, are preserved as having contributed £25. each, which must be equal to £100. at least at this time (1827).

* Parkins' Freebridge Hundred, page 114.

† Coles' MSS.

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1592 The butchery was this year erected at the upper end of the new Market-place,* and the bishop, on request, released his claim to the shambles, and granted the same to the corporation by copy of court roll.

1600 At this period, the see of Ely became vacant, and continued so for eighteen years, during which queen Elizabeth received the whole profits, and upon appointment of the new bishop, the burgesses testified their congratulation by directing their town-bailiff to entertain the "lord of Ely" at the assizes, and to provide twenty stone of the best beef, a *veal*, and a lamb.

1607 Another fire broke out in the Old Market.

1610 The inhabitants obtained a renewal of their charter from James I.

1613 A very violent storm on the first of November, which caused considerable damage, and the sea breaking in overflowed a great part of the town of Wisbech, both on the north and south side, as well as all Marshland; and in January and February of the following year, the country again suffered from the overflow of fresh water through a heavy snow: the damage was estimated at £37,862.†

1615 A sluice was ordered to be built at the Horse-shoe, near Wisbech, which cost £8000.‡

1619 A corn market house having been built by the burgesses, pursuant to Mrs. Sturmyn's will, and a doubt arising respecting their title to the ground on which the same stood, the bishop of Ely was solicited to grant the same to the corporation by copy of court roll, which was complied with.

* This building was taken down in 1810, and the site was thrown into, and now forms part of the present Market-place.

† Parkins, page 114.

‡ This sluice did not stand above seven days, but was blown up by the tides. Dugdale, p. 399, 400.

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1623 Great rejoicings made for prince Charles' return from Spain, and money paid for beer, cakes, bonfires, &c. as well as to the ringers.

1625 Public festivities on the accession of Charles I.

1636 As many of the ten burgesses for the year next preceding as were then present on 3d November, chose ten others for the subsequent year, the freeholders having neglected to choose them on the 2d November.

1637 Another bridge (the last wooden one) was erected over the river.

1642 Wisbech was garrisoned for the parliament during the civil war, and colonel Sir John Palgrave seems to have been commander of the forces.

1644 The house of commons made an order, that the committee appointed for providing fuel for the city of London should confer with the common council upon the ways and prices of bringing turf and peat from Egham, and the fens of Wisbeche and the isle of Ely, for the service of the city.

1646 Edward Buckworth, with others, were fined in considerable sums of money for delinquency, that is, for disrespect to the parliament, as appears by the journals of the house of commons; but an ordinance was afterwards granted for their pardon.

1647 An inundation, occasioned by excessive rains, by which the banks of Wisbech, Elm, Upwell, and Outwell, were broken, and 14,000 acres of land drowned, besides many cattle, and much loss in corn and hay.

1651 A fire on the South Brink destroyed Sturmyn's almshouses and several other dwellings.

1657 A gallery erected in the church for secretary Thurloe, at the expense of the corporation.

1658 The burgesses met on Thursday the 6th January, and chose the rt. hon. secretary Thurloe their *representative for the town*, to sit in the ensuing parliament at Westminster.

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1660 The bailiff of the liberty proclaimed king Charles II. at Wisbech.

—— The old castle rebuilt from a design of Inigo Jones.

1664 Wisbech high fen was this year drained and inclosed.

1668 Secretary Thurloe was accused of high treason.

1670 About this period, not only towns, but private persons, made their own halfpence and farthings, which were called tokens, as copper money was much wanted in exchange; and in 1671, the town-bailiff expended £20. in coining halfpence, with the words, "A Wisbech "Halfpenny," on one side, and the town arms on the other. Soon after this, the government took the coinage into its own hands. The tradesmen at this time used to keep sorting boxes, with several divisions, and when a quantity of any man's or corporation tokens was collected, they took them to be exchanged for silver.

1671 Another violent inundation of the sea, but Marshland was more materially affected than the town of Wisbech.

1675 Some differences appear to have arisen between the then vicar and his parishioners, about the tithe of coleseed, which were probably cotemporary with the introduction of that species of seed into the parish.*

1676 On a census taken, the number of inhabitants was 1705.

1699 In this year, a petition of the capital burgesses of Wisbech, together with justices of the peace, deputy lieutenants, and other chief inhabitants and freeholders of the towns of Wisbech, Newton, Leverington, Tid St. Giles, Elm, Upwell, Outwell, Guyhirn, Parson Drove, and Murrow, was presented to the house of commons, praying that an act might be passed for making the river Lark, alias Burn, navigable, because that the said towns and country adjacent for ten miles in compass, consisted for the most part of pasture, marsh, and fen

* Coles' MSS.

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lands, the produce whereof was mostly employed in feeding of cattle, and for butter, cheese, and summer crops of oats; and that the petitioners being supplied with wheat, rye, and malt from other counties, (especially from Bury and the parts of Suffolk adjoining) by way of return, experienced great inconvenience for want of navigation to and from thence, their interchangeable supply became very chargeable, and in winter, by the badness of the way, impracticable.*

1703 Grain being very dear, on a pretence of scarcity, much rioting took place through the kingdom, and at Wisbech assizes this year, fourteen persons were found guilty, but were not all executed.†

1719 Upon a petition presented this year to the house of commons, praying that no more salt marshes might be embanked, the committee reported, that after hearing counsel, it appeared, on the examination of witnesses, that the town of Wisbech was an ancient sea port, and employed in the trade thereof above thirty ships of burden, which imported wine, iron, deals, coals, pot ash, pitch, tar, and hemp, and divers other foreign commodities, as well as exported those of their own manufacture, whereby there arose to his majesty an income of £4000. per annum, and that there had been shipped off yearly from the port of Wisbech, 1000 tons of oil, and 40,000 quarters of oats: that besides the aforesaid ships, there were nearly thirty smaller vessels of twenty or thirty tons each, which served to lighten the larger ships, and to carry commodities to and from the neighbouring ports; and by such trade, great numbers of seafaring men were employed, which increased the breed of seamen, there having been, from Christmas 1718 to Christmas 1719, cleared at the said port, 241 ships and more.‡

* Journals of the House of Commons.

† Blomefield. ‡ See page 305, &c.

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1722 The poor-house was erected at an expense of £2000.

1730 The town this year seems to have laboured under a decay of trade, which was attributed to certain clandestine dealings carried on by hawkers, pedlars, and petty chapmen; whereupon a petition was presented to the house of commons by the gentlemen, merchants, and principal traders, praying that such dealers should be suppressed.

1735 About this time, a considerable quantity of oil was made and shipped from the port: no less than seven mills in the town were employed in pressing it from seed.

1740 There was a great frost, followed by an untoward summer, which brought on a rise of provisions, with high price of grain, and on Sunday the 29th June, a mob gathered together near the town, entered the same, and broke the corn merchants' windows, seized about twenty-five lasts of wheat, and forced waggons to carry it off, when they sold the same at fourpence per bushel, and some at one penny; they then levied contributions on the shopkeepers, and collected upwards of £30. This alarming the gentry and richer sort of traders, who at first thought themselves unconcerned, they met on the first of July, subscribed nearly £200., and by beat of drum enlisted above 500 men, with whom they marched to Upwell, (the chief rendezvous of the rioters) where they took about forty of them, who, with others taken elsewhere, in all about sixty, were laid in irons, by which means peace was restored.

1750 A smart shock of an earthquake was felt in this island on 23d August: Dr. Stukeley observes that it extended itself to Coventry and Newark, and thence came eastward to Northampton, Uppingham, Stamford, Peterborough, Wisbech, &c. together with all the adjacent places; then it passed over the whole breadth of Ely fen, and

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reached to Bury in Suffolk, an extent of one hundred miles in length, and, generally speaking, forty in breadth, and all were shocked at the same instant of time.

1758 The present stone bridge began to be erected, in lieu of the wooden one built in 1637, was completed in 1760, and crowned with a handsome ballustrade and lamps.

1763 The north bank of Morton's Leam Wash broke, in consequence of the flood waters, and ruined a considerable extent of the level.

1766 The act passed for making a turnpike road from Wisbech to Chatteris ferry.

1770 A terrible breach took place in the north bank, and the country for several miles was covered with water six feet deep, upon the average.

1773 The act passed for making Kinderley's Cut, below the Horse-shoe; the work was commenced upon forthwith, and it is stated, that the first land flood, which came in October, ground down the bottom of the new channel from twelve to sixteen feet deeper than it was cut, which lowered the surface of the water at Gunthorpe sluice five feet, and gave immediate relief to the north level, and vessels of much larger burthen than before came up to Wisbech; whereupon it is thus observed by Golborne, in a report then made by him: "When we "reflect on the great advantages that navigation and "drainage have received from this partial cut, we may "easily conceive the great benefit that would have re- "sulted, had it been continued to the Eye; a work "that would have given the town of Wisbech a navi- "gation for large ships, free from the inconvenience "that attends the entrance into the port of Lynn. The "bottom of the river through the town is very hard, "with an uneven bottom, the soundings suddenly "changing from three to eight feet. It has been

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"observed, that near Wisbech, the river ebbed two feet "and a half lower than it had done two years preceding, "and the tide flowed near an hour longer. This agree- "able alteration was effected by the river being turned "down the new channel. A pair of stairs appeared at "the side of the river, of which the oldest people living "had not the least knowledge or remembrance. A "stone wall was also seen at the lower end of the "town, which was continued over the river in an "oblique direction, at two feet beneath the surface of "low water; and on the side of the channel below "Gunthorpe, a top of a sluice was seen."*

1773 Premiums offered by the corporation for supplying fish in the Wisbech market.

1781 The literary society established; and likewise the association for the prosecution of felons.

1790 The parish again numbered, when the inhabitants amounted to 4710.

1793 The inhabitants of Wisbech and its neighbourhood opened a subscription for supplying his majesty's troops on the continent with extra clothing.

1794 The canal act passed.

1795 The castle and surrounding gardens sold by the lord bishop of Ely, under an act of parliament, to Mr. Joseph Medworth.

—— The kingdom in general was visited this year by a scarcity of corn, and dearness of provision. Though this was felt by all in some measure still it pressed with severity upon the poor, who would have suffered greatly, had they not been relieved by the generous and humane: still a spirit of discontent was observed to have prevailed in Wisbech for a considerable time, though no serious

* See note, page 45.

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consequences at first shewed themselves; but on a certain market day, a party of labouring bankers paraded the town with drums and fifes, having bread and meat stuck upon poles, to excite the lower classes to tumult and disorder. Their numbers at length increased to that degree, that it was necessary to send for the military to quell so turbulent a spirit: in the mean time, the house of one of the principal inhabitants,* in the centre of the town, was thrown open during the evening of the day in which this licentious spirit was prevalent, for the use of any gentlemen resorting thither, so that it became the general rendezvous for all the loyal and peaceable inhabitants, who assembled to deliberate on measures to be taken for the suppression of these disturbances. Whilst the mob were collected around this spot, one of the gentlemen there assembled, observing one man more forward than the rest in exciting his companions to riotous acts, rushed out of the hall-door, and seizing this ringleader by the collar in the midst of the crowd, dragged him into the house, and secured him in safe custody; this spirited conduct had the effect to intimidate the rest of the mob, so as to prevent their proceeding to any further act of riot at that period; several windows were indeed broken, but no particular damage ensued. At another time not far distant, the town was threatened with disturbance on account of the presence of an itinerant orator and noted demagogue of that day, who attempted to disseminate his licentious principles, by his harangues amongst the inhabitants, spending a few days at the castle, and being conducted from thence to the houses of his friends and

* The late Richard Shepherd, esq. one of his majesty's deputy-lieutenants, whose residence was opposite to the new town hall.

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partizans by drum and fife; but the town's people in general gave him very little encouragement, so that at length he was compelled to retreat.

It may not be improper here to observe that upon all public occasions, the principal inhabitants, as well as those who occupy subordinate situations, have shewn themselves, on any emergency, not only loyal to their king, but truly attached to their country, by a general disposition towards good order and regularity; a proper example is set by the magistracy and principal inhabitants, and the people seem to know their just station, and while they support an independent spirit, the same is so tempered with a becoming submission to those who bear rule, as to produce the most happy results to the common welfare of the place. A wayward spirit at the time of the annual election of capital burgesses may sometimes have withdrawn the people from the exercise of a sound judgment, yet, in a few months they have generally returned to a just sense of the value of those services, which, on reflection, they have found to have been meritoriously exerted in their behalf; and their general feeling, unswayed by political accidental changes, has then been exercised in rewarding by their public suffrages, the exertions of those gentlemen who have employed their talents in behalf of the town. In taking a period of forty years, it may be said that such will be allowed to be the general complexion and temper of the inhabitants of this town; fresh arrivals and the introduction of strangers at some periods may affect and change their sentiments for a time, but the good sense of the elder and longer established residents ultimately prevails, so as to subdue the tempers of the new comers to the common good feeling of the place. Having become

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a town of enterprize, the attention of strangers is excited towards it; thus a continual succession of inhabitants is taking place, who bring with them new sentiments and new measures, such as are not always accordant to the opinions of those longer acquainted with the town. But if the judgment of the latter continue to prevail over the innovations of the former, the best interests of the place will be then, as heretofore, most likely to prevail.

Volunteer Corps and Local Militia.

1797 The revolutionary licentiousness, which had taken possession of France in the room of a real and substantial liberty, was now at its full height; an uncommon agitation prevailed throughout the kingdom, in consequence of the fear of disaffection at home, and every Briton was now called upon to exert himself in the cause of his country against both foreign and domestic foes. The inhabitants of Wisbech supported their usual character of loyalty, by making an offer to government to train a corps of volunteer infantry, which being accepted, a company forthwith was raised, consisting of sixty men, of which Mr. Rayner was appointed captain, Mr. Hardwicke, lieutenant, and Mr. Fawssett, junior, ensign. This spirited corps (chiefly principal tradesmen) continued embodied until the peace or truce of 1801. From the restless spirit of the French government, and from the unbridled ambition of Buonaparte, the then first consul and ruler of France, Britain was again called upon to defend her honour, for in the space of twelve months, hostilities recommenced, when Buonaparte, avowing serious intentions to invade this kingdom, a new volunteer corps of infantry was raised, to consist of three

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hundred men, with an offer to march to any part of Great Britain, in case of actual invasion. To this corps, the Thorney and Whittlesea volunteer companies were united, and Mr. Rayner was appointed lieutenant-colonel commandant, and Mr. Edes, major.

In 1807, colonel Rayner and major Edes resigned their commissions, when the earl of Hardwicke was pleased to appoint the compiler of this history to be the lieutenant-colonel commandant of the new regiment. An additional light infantry company was formed at Wisbech, and with the reinforcement from Thorney and Whittlesea, the battalion consisted of six hundred rank and file, and was denominated "The Third Cambridge "Regiment of Volunteer Infantry."* In 1808, an act passed for enabling his majesty to establish a permanent "local militia" force, under certain restrictions, for the defence of the realm. By this act, corps of volunteers were allowed to transfer themselves, with the approbation of his majesty, into such local militia. The officers

* As a proof of the estimation in which the services of the volunteers were held by the country, we beg to transcribe the resolution of the house of commons, passed nem. con.: "Resolved, that the thanks of this house "be given to the several volunteer and yeomanry corps of the United "Kingdom, for the promptitude and zeal with which, at a crisis the most "momentous to this country, they have associated for its defence. Ordered, "that a return be prepared, and be laid before the house in the next session "of parliament, of all the volunteer and yeomanry corps, whose services "shall have been accepted by his majesty, describing each corps; in order "that such return may be entered on the journals of this house, and the "patriotic example of such voluntary exertions transmitted to posterity. "Ordered, that Mr. Speaker do signify the said resolution and order, by "letter, to his majesty's lieutenant of each county, riding, and place in Great "Britain, and to his excellency the lord-lieutenant of Ireland."

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were required to have the same qualifications as the regular militia, and the regiments were to be called out yearly, to be trained and exercised for twenty-eight days, during which time they were to be subject to the mutiny act, and in every respect to be under the same regulation as other military forces. A bounty of two guineas was given to each volunteer who transferred his services. Under this act, most of the volunteers in this district, officers as well as men, agreed to transfer their services into the local militia, when the right honourable the earl of Hardwicke, the lord-lieutenant, formed one regiment for the isle of Ely, consisting of 1200 men, and one for the county; the isle of Ely regiment was divided into two battalions, of which the earl Delawarr was appointed lieutenant-colonel commandant, and the colonel commandant of the late third Cambridge regiment of volunteers, lieutenant-colonel. In the year 1813, his majesty considering it important that the most effectual measures should be adopted for the vigorous prosecution of the war upon the continent of Europe, an act was passed for enabling his majesty to accept the services of the local militia out of their counties; in pursuance of which act, the battalion under the command of lieutenant-colonel Watson was assembled at Wisbech, when he and a considerable proportion of the officers and men voluntarily offered to extend their services to any part of Great Britain in which his majesty might think proper to employ them. However, Buonaparte's mad expedition into Russia having brought about those reverses which ended in a general peace in the year 1814, the local militia were not called upon to fulfil their offer. Since that event, the corps has never been assembled, but the officers still retain their respective commissions.

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1798 A meeting was held in Wisbech for considering the expediency of making voluntary contributions for aiding government in prosecuting the war with vigour, and a subscription was forthwith entered into, and the amount transmitted to government.

1807 It was this year proposed that a turnpike road should be formed from the town of Thorney, to lead through Peakirke or Black Drove, to Wisbech Guyhirn, and by erecting a bridge over the spot where the ferry now plies,* communicate from thence to the south or opposite side of the river with the Wisbech turnpike road to London. A bridge was proposed to be made with sufficient water-way and of such dimensions, as not to impede the passage of the floods or ice down the Wisbech river. The measure, however, created considerable alarm, and apprehensions were entertained by the proprietors in the middle and south levels, that such a bridge would in floods raise the water much higher than it ever had risen before, and greatly endanger the adjoining lands, particularly in cases of dams formed by the ice in the breaking up of a frost. As the term of ice dams may be said in some measure to be peculiar to this part of the country, a description thereof may not be unacceptable. After a frost of long continuance, and when the thaw takes place, and the ice begins to break up, particularly in the Wash between Guyhirn and Peterborough, where the banks are nearly half a mile asunder on the average, and more than

* The ferry at Guyhirn belongs to the lord bishop of Ely, which is at present leased to John Marshall, esq. who provides a convenient ferry-boat, and is entitled to take certain tolls. This line of road was not approved of by the inhabitants of Wisbech, inasmuch as by uniting with the London turnpike road five miles beyond the town, it was likely to draw considerable traffic therefrom.

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twelve miles in length from Peterborough bridge, such ice proceeds downwards, first in columns of nearly an acre in dimensions, and from five to nine or ten inches thick, diminishing as it passes, according as it happens to be acted upon by the friction of its own bodies, or by the force of the impelling current, and forms itself at length wedgewise against obstructions, and in tier above tier, nearly in a vertical position, and not horizontally on the surface of the stream; so that it is almost morally impossible for any mechanical force to dislodge with timely effect the immense weight and strength of ice so accumulated.* Under all circumstances, however, it was thought proper to withdraw the plan of erecting a bridge over the river at Guyhirn, and in a few years afterwards, another for making a turnpike road from Thorney to Wisbech was revived, by continuing the line direct from thence to Wisbech bridge.

1809 Wisbech has at all times been distinguished for loyalty and attachment to the sovereign. In the grand and joyous festivals to celebrate our late revered monarch's (George III.) completion of a reign of half a century, over a people who loved and adored him, Wisbech bore an honourable and distinguished part. The following is a description of the manner in which the event was celebrated in this town: This jubilee took place on the 25th October, and the dawning of one of the finest days that ever appeared in that month was ushered in by the ringing of bells, and "the day was celebrated "with loyalty and beneficence. The officers of the "Wisbech battalion of local militia, attended by their "band and staff on permanent pay, formed part of a

* The last important ice dam of this nature was formed in the river near Wisbech, on the breaking up of the frost in the years 1813-14.

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" large congregation at church, where an appropriate " discourse was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Jobson, from " Psalm lxxviii. v. 72.; immediately after which, a " collection was made at the church doors, for the " purpose of enabling the widows, orphans, and afflicted " poor of the parish, to participate in the general joy. " Three excellent volleys were fired by the non-com- " missioned officers of the local militia. In the afternoon " the colonel, with his brother officers, and the gentlemen " of the town, assembled at the White Hart inn, to " drink the long continuance of life and glory to our " beloved sovereign, when several loyal and patriotic " toasts were given, and the day was spent with honour- " able exultation and rational festivity. The evening " concluded with a ball, which was graced by all the " beauty and respectability in the town and neighbour- " hood. An interesting spectacle was presented on the " colonel's lawn, in the pleasing appearance of all the " boys and girls of the charity schools, who were regaled " by his lady with cake and wine, and being united " with the choir belonging to the church, joined in an " anthem of praise to Divine Providence, for vouchsafing " to continue to us a life so greatly dear as that of our " revered monarch, concluding with God save the King. " Nor were the poor men, women, and children in the " workhouse forgotten, for their hearts were cheered on " this happy occasion."*

1814 A general peace took place this year, and the same was celebrated at Wisbech by a grand festival to the

* A lady, the wife of a captain in the navy, collected and published in one volume 4to an account of the celebration of this festival in the principal towns of the kingdom, and appropriated the profits to " the society " for the relief of prisoners confined for small debts:" from this collection the account of the Wisbech festival is extracted.

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poor, who dined at public tables prepared in the market place; it was not only gratifying to the thousands who partook, but to those who were spectators of it. Roast beef, plum pudding, and a liberal quantity of strong beer, were provided by the inhabitants of the town. Nothing could exceed the spirit and harmony with which the festival in honour of the glorious peace was conducted. Appropriate toasts were given at the sound of the bugle, and at four o'clock all retired to enjoy the rustic sports. The plan of the arrangements on that day, though on a less extensive scale, was pursued on another important era, viz. the coronation of his majesty George IV.; we shall, therefore, reserve the minutiæ of the detail until we record that event.

1816 Many years having elapsed since any regular valuation had been made of the general property in houses and lands within the parish of Wisbech, certain intelligent persons were appointed to view, and report, according to their judgment, on the value of such property, when the actual rental thereof was raised from £12,000. to nearly £20,000., whereon the parish assessment was and has been ever since charged.

Riots at Littleport and Ely.

—— By the transition from war to peace, a number of persons were thrown on the country without employment; work became scarce, and wages low. The manufacturers also were much depressed, so that many discontents broke out, not only in the manufacturing districts, but in various parts of the kingdom. At Wisbech, a riot was openly threatened, which was only prevented by the activity of the magistrates, and the prompt appearance of the three troops of yeomanry cavalry of Upwell,

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Whittlesea, and March, added to the organized assistance of between two and three hundred of the respectable and well disposed inhabitants, who volunteered their services to be sworn as special constables to act on an emergency. These measures so effectually paralysed all the intentions of the evil-minded and their emissaries, that no public disturbance took place, though a considerable number of bad characters, as well of the neighbourhood as from a distance, strayed into the town on the market-day, mixing with the populace in the streets and market, with every intention of exciting them to riot.

At Littleport the disorder broke out into actual riot, for in the night of the 22d May 1816, a desperate mob of men assembled there, and attacked the house of the Rev. Mr. Vachell, the rector, and also a magistrate; he for some time resisted their endeavours at his door, armed with a pistol, but was overpowered by three men rushing suddenly upon and disarming him. His wife and daughters were constrained to make their escape, running nearly the whole of the way to Ely. The rioters then broke all the windows, and nearly demolished every thing in the house, burning all Mr. Vachell's valuable papers and writings, and stamping his plate under their feet; they then proceeded to different shops in the town, and to the publicans' cellars, &c. helping themselves to money and liquors, without any one daring to oppose them. Elated with their present success, they then got a waggon and team of horses, and proceeded to Ely, taking with them every gun and other deadly weapon they could find. On their arrival at that city, they were joined by some of its refractory inhabitants, and demanded contributions from the houses and shops, besides

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extorting money from several persons, which was unavoidably assented to, and there was now every appearance of the most serious consequences; even threats were thrown out of setting fire to the noble cathedral. The Littleport banditti, however, separated themselves, and returned to their own town, after liberating two of their confederates from prison, where they had been committed by the Ely magistrates. At length the riots were terminated, by the very spirited and active exertions of Sir Henry Bate Dudley, baronet, the Rev. Mr. Law, and the Rev. Mr. Metcalfe, the then acting magistrates, aided by a very respectable number of the gentlemen and inhabitants of Ely, and the Royston troop of volunteer cavalry, who, with a small detachment of the first royal dragoons sent from Bury, proceeded in a body to Littleport; a severe struggle now ensued between them and the rioters, who had secreted themselves in different houses, armed with guns, with which they fired many shots at the military and civil power; one of the soldiers was severely wounded, whereupon the military received orders "to fire," and the man who had wounded the soldier was instantly shot dead, and another fell. When this took place, the rioters were completely disconcerted, and fled in every direction, but by the activity of the military and civil power, no less than seventy-three of them were immediately taken prisoners. Among them were several persons of some property and apparent respectability in life. Fifty guns and nine or ten long fowling pieces were taken from the rioters. Special assizes were appointed to be held at Ely in the beginning of June following, when Mr. Justice Abbott and Mr. Justice Burrough were associated with Edward Christian, esq. the chief justice of the isle in the com-

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mission, more than seventy prisoners having been committed for trial. The assizes lasted from the Monday until the following Saturday, when

24 were condemned, of whom five were left for execution and the sentence of the others mitigated.
6 acquitted.
10 were discharged by proclamation.
36 were allowed to be set at liberty on producing bail for their good behaviour.

76 Total.

After this the district was restored to perfect tranquillity.

1817 The whole kingdom was involved in one general scene of sorrow, by the death of the princess Charlotte of Wales, the presumptive heir to the crown of these realms, and of her royal infant, on the 6th November. One common sentiment of regret occupied the minds of all, on hearing the distressing intelligence, as though each had been told of the death of one of his own family. Thus two generations of the royal house of Brunswick were at once shrouded in the tomb, and the succession left contracted and indistinct. On the day of the interment of her royal highness and the infant, (19th November) divine service was performed in the church of Wisbech, and a sermon preached on the occasion by the Rev. William Hardwicke, the lecturer. The pulpit and reading desk were hung with black cloth, which continued for three months, and the shops in the town were all closed for the day. A general mourning was ordered for six weeks.

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1818 In November of the following year, died queen Charlotte, the august consort of his majesty George III. The burst of national feeling and veneration, which was manifested by all at the death of "our beloved princess," did not in that degree display itself on this occasion. The funeral of her late majesty took place at Windsor on the 2d December following. The shops in Wisbech were partially shut; there was no sermon at the church; the pulpit and reading desk were hung with black cloth, which continued six Sundays. General mourning was ordered for six weeks.

1820 Our aged and excellent sovereign George III. expired at Windsor castle, at thirty-five minutes past eight o'clock on Saturday evening, 29th January: he was in the sixtieth year of his reign, which had extended to the unprecedented length of fifty-nine years, three months, and nine days. His majesty George IV. was immediately proclaimed. His late majesty's funeral took place on the 16th February, and was observed here with every mark of becoming solemnity. The shops of tradesmen were all shut. Service, with a sermon, was performed at the church, and the pulpit and reading desk covered with black cloth.

Proclamation of George IV.

—— On Wednesday the 9th February, the accession of his majesty George IV. was publicly proclaimed at Wisbech. The day was ushered in with ringing of bells. At one o'clock the gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood met at the sessions-house, and from thence proceeded on the South Brink to receive the deputy sheriff, in the following order of procession:

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Two Trumpeters on Horseback.
Chief Constable on Horseback, supported by
Petty Constables on Foot.
The Lieutenant-Colonel of the Local Militia, in Uniform,
on Horseback.
Officers of his Regiment on Foot, with
Standards flying.
Military Band.
Sheriffs' Officers and Corporation Beadles on Foot.
Vicar of Wisbech, and Clergymen of the Town and
Neighbourhood in order on Foot, in their Robes.
The Magistrates and Deputy Lieutenants of the Town
and Neighbourhood.
The Capital Burgesses of the Corporation.
Officers of the Navy resident in the Town and Neighbourhood on Horseback.
Gentlemen of the Town and Neighbourhood on Horseback.
Constables on Foot to line the whole.

The procession first stopped at the sessions-house, where wine and cakes were distributed. The proclamation was then read by the deputy sheriff in court, and afterwards, from the steps of the building, to the assembled populace. The procession next moved forward to the market-place, where the proclamation was again read, and after the cheering of the multitude had ceased, "God save the King" was sung by about one hundred and fifty children of the national school; the procession then moved to the town-hall, the old market, the north brink, and returned to the Rose and Crown inn, where proclamation was made for the last time, when this part of the interesting ceremony concluded. The novelty of the occasion, and the fineness of the weather, attracted an immense number of spectators, and it was

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calculated there could not be less than 14,000. The enjoyment of the day was heightened by the poor being made partakers of its festivities. Hot dinners were given to the inmates of the workhouse, to the children of the charity schools, and the prisoners in the gaol; and donations of upwards of seven hundred bushels of coals, and twelve hundred loaves of bread, provided by a public subscription of the inhabitants, were distributed among the poor families of the town. Several barrels of ale were also given to the populace. At half past four upwards of fifty gentlemen sat down to an excellent dinner; Robert Hardwicke esq. town-bailiff, was in the chair, supported by lieutenant-colonel Watson as his vice-president, and William Rayner and H. J. Nicholls esqrs. as aide-presidents. The evening was passed with the greatest conviviality, and the company separated, highly gratified with the transactions of a day so appropriate to the dignity and importance of the event, and with the order and decorum which so universally prevailed.

Coronation of George IV.

1821 On the day of the coronation of his present majesty, George IV. which was appointed for the 19th of July, a general disposition prevailed amongst the inhabitants to express their feeling of loyalty. It was determined to provide a public dinner in the market place for such inhabitants as might think proper to partake thereof, the details of which it is hoped will not be considered too tedious. A subscription was entered into by the gentlemen and ladies of the town, to provide bread, beef, mutton, plum puddings, beer, &c. together with a band of music; also field sports to be exhibited. Stewards

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and presidents were accordingly appointed. An apportionment of meat was provided at the rate of three quarters of a pound, and half a pound of pudding, for each person; and one ox, two heifers, and fourteen sheep were purchased; about 4400 penny loaves and thirty-one barrels of beer were provided. A band was formed, consisting of twenty-six musicians, who had an early dinner and a pint of ale provided for each. The following regulations were printed.

Wisbech St. Peter's.—Regulations for the Festival on Thursday the 19th Day of July 1821, *in celebration of the Coronation of His Most Excellent Majesty King George the Fourth.*

The church bells will ring at seven and eleven o'clock in the morning. At half-past twelve o'clock the bells will again ring, at which time precisely the inhabitants of the town are to assemble at the places specified in their respective tickets, viz.

1st Division, For the Market-Place, Church Lane, Ship Lane and the adjoining alleys—*Ship Lane.*
2d ditto, For the Horse Fair—*Horse Fair.*
3d ditto, For the South Brink and Deadman's Lane—*Yorke Row.*
4th ditto, For the North Brink and the Old Market—*Facing the Vine.*
5th ditto, For the Trafalgar Row and the Lynn Road—*Sluice Bridge.*
6th ditto, For the south end of Timber Market and Elm Street beyond the Ferry Boat—*Hill facing the Ferry Boat.*
7th ditto, For the north part of ditto between the Churchyard and Ferry Boat—*Opening facing the Wheat Sheaf.*

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They will there find ready to receive them, the presidents and vice-presidents of their respective tables, who will head their own companies, and with as little delay as possible proceed to the Market-place. The president of the first table of each division will proceed first, the next table in rotation after him, and so on until all are occupied. There will be at the head of every table a pole, with a label upon it, corresponding with the ticket of the division, and the number of the table upon it. Each president will conduct his company to the proper table, where the carvers will be seated, and the company will take their seats in the intermediate spaces. The carvers are requested to be in their respective places by one o'clock precisely.

It is presumed that, by attention to order, all may be seated by a quarter past one o'clock, at which time a trumpet will be sounded, when all the carvers will rise, and, with the assistants appointed by the presidents and vice-presidents, will proceed to the places mentioned in their tickets, and each bring one dish of pudding and meat to his own place. This being effected, a second trumpet will be sounded. Grace will then be said by the president of each table, and dinner begin directly. Dinner being over, the bugle will be sounded, when Grace after Meat will be said. The carvers will then rise, and, with the assistants, each carry two dishes from their table to the depôts appointed, as follows:

1st division, tables 1, 2, 3, 4, ...
2d ditto, tables 5, 6, 7, 8, ...
3d ditto, tables 9, 10, ... } *To the New Inn.*
4th ditto, tables 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,
16, 17, 18,.....,

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5th division, tables 19, 20, 21,.....
6th ditto, tables 22, 23, 24, 25,.... } *To No.* 8, *Market*
7th ditto, tables 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, } *Street.*
31, 32, ...

The carvers and assistants will return immediately, and the toasts will then be given in the following order, by signal of trumpet.

1. His Majesty George the Fourth, with four times four. Band—"God save the King."
2. The Duke of York and the Royal Family, with three times three. Band—"Duke of York's March."
3. The Army and Navy, with three times three. Band—"Britons strike Home."
4. Prosperity to the Town and Trade of Wisbech, with three times three. Band—"Wisbech Troop."
5. Duke of Wellington, with three times three. Band—"See the Conquering Hero comes."
6. Old England for ever, with three times three. Band—"Rule Britannia."

An interval of ten minutes will elapse between the toasts, which will be announced, on signal of trumpet, by the president and vice-president of every table. Having drunk the toast, all will rise, and on the second signal of trumpet, the whole company will cheer together.

After the toasts are all drunk, two signals will then be sounded in succession, when all the women and children will retire.

Upon a grand flourish of trumpets, the band playing "God save the King," the company will then move in

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procession to the field appointed for the rustic sports, under the direction of the presidents. It is requested that no person will rise from table during dinner, as beer will be supplied.

No guns or pistols to be fired, nor will any squibs, serpents, or crackers be allowed to be let off on any account or pretence whatsoever, in the Market-place or streets of the town during any part of the evening.

STEWARDS.

The Town-Bailiff.

The Rev. Dr. Jobson.	John Edes, Esq.
Robert Hardwicke, Esq.	Henry James Nicholls, Esq.
William Rayner, Esq.	Captain Swaine, R.N.
John Marshall, Esq.	Richard Shepherd, Esq.
Lieut. Col. Watson.	Jonathan Peckover, Esq.

PRESIDENTS.	VICE-PRESIDENTS.
Rev. Jeremiah Jackson.	Mr. Edward Jackson.
R. J. King.	Matthew Leach.
T. P. Holmes.	John Sculthorpe, jun.
Mr. Richard Baxter.	Henry Leach.
John Dowson.	Enderby Laughton.
Weatherhead.	William Jump, jun.
Robert Francis Pate.	William Baxter.
James Usill.	Robert Marris.
Abraham Usill.	Harley M. Usill.
William Stevens.	Bartholomew Adams.
Robert Ward.	J. S. Richardson.
Thomas Moore.	William Moore.
Thomas Stear.	John Archbould.
Henry Herring.	G. Hewitt.
C. Metcalfe, jun.	Thomas Life, jun.

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PRESIDENTS.	VICE-PRESIDENTS.
Mr. John Wing.	Mr. S. Goode.
Robert Clarke.	Thomas Matthews.
John Chamberlin.	Richard Freeman.
John Chapman.	Peter Beck.
Thomas Hall.	Thomas Hall, jun.
Simon Hardy.	George Life.
William Squier.	John Pope.
Dr. Stuart.	William Dow.
Mr. Joseph Taylor.	William Nixon.
James Smith.	Edward Squire.
Charles Clarke.	Henry Harvey.
John Harber.	Joseph Gronow.
Gregory Wright.	John Hill.
Thomas Wraight.	John Cripps.

On the day of the coronation, the stewards met at the town-hall at half-past twelve; about one, they moved from thence to the market-hill, preceded by the town constables with staves, band of music, and the colours belonging to the Wisbech battalion of local militia. The tables were all ranged in regular order in the market-place. An elevated table was prepared for the stewards about the centre. The town-bailiff presided. More than 4300 persons, each having brought a plate, knife and fork, and dinner mug, seated themselves at the tables with more than 3000 surrounding spectators. On the first signal of the trumpet, the tables were loaded with beef, puddings, and vegetables; on the second, grace was said by the Rev. Dr. Jobson, vicar. The utmost good order prevailed. On grace being said after meat, the health of his most excellent majesty George the Fourth, was drunk with loud and four times repeated cheers. The other patriotic toasts followed in succession,

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each accompanied with appropriate tunes. After which, the stewards, escorted by the band, colours, drums, and fifes, conducted the company to the field appointed for rustic sports. The whole crowd seemed impressed with sensations which will long be cherished and remembered. The total expense amounted to £296. 19*s*. 8*d*.

1827 An act of parliament received the royal assent, for erecting and endowing a chapel of ease in the parish of Wisbech St. Peter's.

—— Another act received the like assent, for improving the outfall of the river Nene, and the drainage of the lands discharging their waters into the Wisbech river, and the navigation of the said Wisbech river, from the upper end of Kinderley's cut to the sea.

We close the account of these occurrences with a list of the aldermen of the guild, and of the town-bailiffs of Wisbech.

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The Names of such of the ALDERMEN *of the Guild of the Holy Trinity in Wisbech, from its Foundation, 2d Richard II., 1379, to its Dissolution, 29th Henry VIII., 1540; and of such of the* TOWN-BAILIFFS *as are noticed in the Records, from the Incorporation of the Town, in the third Year of the Reign of King Edward VI.*

Aldermen of the Guild of the Holy Trinity.

The records commence 2d Richard II. A.D. 1379.

The accountant's expenses in respect to the guild are the first transactions stated, after which there is a lapse of forty-four years, until

2d HENRY VI.

	A.D.
John Lambe, alderman	1423
The like	1424
The like	1425
The like	1427
The like	1429
The like	1430
John Lambe, alderman	1431
Nicholas Outclark ..	1432
——— Sutton	1436
The like	1442
The like	1443
John Masse	1445
The like	1452
The like	1458
The like	1459
The like	1460

EDWARD IV.

John Masse	1461
The like	1462
The like	1463

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	A.D.
John Masse, alderman	1464
The like	1465
The like	1466
The like	1467
William Calowe, esq.	1468
The like	1469
The like	1470
The like	1471
The like	1472
The like	1473
The like	1474
Martin Andrew, in absence of W. Calowe	1475
William Calowe, esq.	1476
The like	1477
The like	1478
Robert Dygby	1479
The like	1480
The like	1481
The like	1482

EDWARD V.

Robert Dygby	1483

RICHARD III.

Robert Dygby	1484

HENRY VII.

Robert Dygby	1485
The like	1486
The like	1487
Robert Dygby, alderman	1488
The like	1489
John Burwell	1494
The like	1495
Robert Tooke	1496
John Burwell	1502
William Gatesend ..	1503
The like	1504
The like	1505
Dr. Richard Wyatt, vicar	1506
The like	1507
The like	1508

HENRY VIII.

Dr. Richard Wyatt ..	1509
The like	1510
The like	1511
Nicholas Style	1512
The like	1513
The like	1514
William Ladd	1515
The like	1516
Thomas Wythe, gent.	1517
The like	1518
The like	1519
The like	1520
Richard Rede	1521
The like	1522
The like	1523
Alexander Balam ..	1524
The like	1525
Lawrence Daniel ..	1526
The like	1527

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	A.D.
Alexander Balam ..	1531
The like	1532
The like	1533
The like	1534
The like	1535
The like	1536
The like	1537
The like	1538
The like	1539

The act of parliament for dissolution of monasteries, passed in .. 1540

EDWARD VI.

John Procter, alderman 1547

His majesty, in the third year of his reign, granted a charter of incorporation, with power to elect, on every 1st of November, ten of the more honest and more discrete inhabitants, "maintaining a "family," to have the care of the several affairs of the town, &c. And by such charter the following ten men were nominated in 1550, viz.

Henry Goodrick, esq.
Richard Everard, esq.
John Sutton
Nicholas Fordham
John Procter
Thomas Crosse
William Beste
William Perte
Robert Scorterede
Thomas Bocher

Town-Bailiffs.

ELIZABETH.

	A.D.
Richard Best, gent. ..	1564
Thomas Crosse	1565
The like	1566
Robert Cooper	1577
John Williamson ..	1578
Thomas Pierson	1585
The like	1586
John Ladd	1587
John Ladd	1588
The like	1591
William Sturmyn ..	1594
James Saylebank	1596
Robert Tipping ..	1597
James Saylebank, 2d time	1598
William Wilkes	1599
Thomas Crosse	1600
Robert Tipping, 2d time	1601
Thomas Crosse	1602

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JAMES I.

	A.D.
Nicholas Sandford, gent.	1603
Thomas Crosse	1604
Thomas Pigge	1605
William Edwards ..	1606
Matthias Taylor, esq.	1607
John Sandford, gent.	1608
John Warner	1609
Thomas Crosse, 6th time	1610

The king, in the eighth year of his reign, granted his letters patent, for incorporating the inhabitants; under which charter the first town-bailiff appointed was

	A.D.
Anthony Fisher, gent.	1611
Thomas Pigge	1612
Thomas Edwards ..	1613
Thomas Parke, esq. ..	1614
Thomas Pearson, gent.	1615
John Marshall	1616
Thomas Procter ..	1617
Thomas Williams ..	1618
The like	1619
The like	1620
The like	1621
William Twells	1622
Thomas Williams ..	1623
The like, 6th time ..	1624

CHARLES I.

	A.D.
Edward Buckworth, esq.	1625
Nicholas Sandford, gent.	1626
Matthias Taylor, esq.* 2d time	1627
Thomas Girling, gent.	1628
The like	1629
Anthony Fisher ..	1630
Arthur Taylor	1631
James Whynnall ..	1632
Thomas Pigge, 3d time	1633
John Day	1634
Thomas Swaine, Edward Crosse remainder of the year	1635
John Wilson, gent. ..	1636
Edward Crosse	1637
William Edwards, jun.	1638
Matthias Taylor, Thomas Pigge remainder of the year	1639
Robert Edwards	1640
Thomas Pierson	1641
Everard Buckworth, esq.	1642
Nicholas Sandford ..	1643
John Daniel	1644
William Fisher, esq.	1645
Henry Ferrour, gent.	1646
John Marshall	1647
Nich. Sandford, 3d time	1648
William Edwards, sen.	1649

* See page 259.

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COMMONWEALTH.

	A.D.
John Wilson, gent. ..	1650
The like	1651
The like	1652
The like	1653
Anthony Balam	1654
Robert Twells	1655
John Wilson, 6th time	1656
William Fisher, esq...	1657
James Edwards, gent.	1658*
The like	1659

CHARLES II.

William Walsham, gent.	1660
Robert Stevens	1661
John Wilson, 7th time, Nicholas Sandford remainder of the year..	1662
James Edwards.....	1663
The like	1664
The like, 5th time ..	1665
Anth. Buckworth, esq.	1666
John Neale, gent. ..	1667
The like, 2d time ..	1668

This king renewed the town charter, whereby the ten men were to be called "Capital "Burgesses," and to be elected every 2d November, under which last charter the first town-bailiff elected was

	A.D.
John Marshall, gent.	1669
Thomas Edwards, esq.	1670
Robert Vaughan, gent.	1671
James Whinnel	1672
John Coxen	1673
The like and John Neave	1674
Richard Harrison	1675
Thomas Flanner	1676
John Marshall, 4th time	1677
Simon Loake	1678
James Whinnel	1679
The like, 4th time ..	1680
Philip Easinghurst ..	1681
John Bellamy	1682
Jonas Brown	1683
Daniel Walker	1684

JAMES II.

William Fox, gent. ..	1685
Oliver Brown	1686
Henry Medow	1687

WILLIAM AND MARY.

William Fox, 2d time	1688
Henry Laughton	1689
William Tunnard ...	1690
James Marshall, sen.	1691
William Allen, gent.	1692
Richard Loake	1693
John Twells, esq. ..	1694
John Barker, gent. ..	1695
Joseph Taylor	1696

* The annual elections of 1658, 1659, and 1660, were held under the authority of letters patent granted by the Protector Oliver.

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	A.D.
Robert Gynn	1697
James Whinnel, jun.	1698
The like, 2d time ..	1699
Edward Bellamy, esq.	1700
Richard Loake, 2d time, on his decease Joseph Taylor, 2d time ...	1701

ANNE.

Thomas Cock, gent.	1702
Richard Bladwick ..	1703
Robert Twells	1704
Lawrence Banyer ...	1705
Nathaniel Kinderley ..	1706
Richard Loake	1707
William Stevens	1708
John Kelsall, esq. ..	1709
Rev. John Bellamy, clk.	1710
John Middleton, gent.	1711
Edward Crosse	1712
Henry Longstae	1713

GEORGE I.

Anth. Lumpkin, gent.	1714
Samuel Vine	1715
John Marshall, jun. esq.	1716
Rev. T. Cole, clk. vicar	1717
Anthony Lumpkin ...	1718
John Horncastle	1719
James Anthony	1720
Thomas Spire	1721
Richard Taylor, esq...	1722
John Cuthbert, gent.	1723
Thomas Towers	1724
Henry Bull, D.D. vicar	1725
Edward Southwell, esq.	1726

GEORGE II.

Henry Southwell, gent.	1727
James Lowry	1728
Jacob Norris	1729
Charles Vavazor ..	1730
James Anthony, esq...	1731
Richard Taylor, gent.	1732
Robert Hemus	1733
John Thompson ..	1734
Thomas Marlow	1735
William Flanner ..	1736
Robert Gynn	1737
Samuel Massey	1738
Isaac Young	1739
Thomas Woods	1740
John Bellamy	1741
Edmund Cobb, esq. ..	1742
Edward Southwell, esq.	1743
William Ezekiel Flanner, gent.	1744
Charles Browne	1745
Robert Wensley ..	1746
William Long	1747
Joseph Barwick ..	1748
Edward Southwell, esq. 3d time	1749
Rev. Henry Burroughs, clerk, vicar	1750

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	A.D.
John Garland, gent. ..	1751
David Waite	1752
Robert Wensley, 2d time	1753
Thomas Berrier	1754
Henry Southwell, esq. 2d time	1755
Samuel Massey, M.D. 2d time	1756
Isaac Young, gent. ..	1757
John Bellamy	1758
Jeremiah Hancock ..	1759

GEORGE III.

William Marshall, gent.	1760
Sir Philip Vavazor, knt.	1761
Edward Warmoll, gent.	1762
Hugh Maplesden ..	1763
John Southwell, esq...	1764
John Thompson, gent. 2d time	1765
George Swaine	1766
The like	1767
Thomas Chapman ..	1768
Robert Colville, esq.	1769
Sir Philip Vavazor, knt. 2d time	1770
John Waite, gent. ..	1771
Henry Burroughs, LL.D 2d time	1772
Wm. Skrimshire, gent.	1773
Joseph Hancock ..	1774
John Warren, D.D. vicar	1775
Richard Colville, esq.	1776
John Mayer, gent. ..	1777
Thomas Fawssett	1778
Robert Kilby	1779
Thomas Newman ..	1780
William Skrimshire ..	1781
The like	1782
Robert Stevens ..	1783
James Bellamy	1784
William Smalley ..	1785
Rev. T. Sheepshanks, A.M.	1786
Mann Hutcheson, F.S.A.	1787
Robert Hardwicke, esq.	1788
William Rayner	1789
Hon. and Rev. Charles Lindsay, A.M. vicar	1790
John Mayer, gent. 2d time	1791
Josiah King Life ..	1792
John Edes, esq.	1793
Robert Kilby, gent.	1794
William Clark	1795
Rev. Cæsar Morgan, D.D. vicar	1796
Rev. Wm. Walker ..	1797
John Swansborough..	1798
Abraham Hardy, gent.	1799
William Skrimshire, esq. 4th time	1800
Charles Laughton, gent.	1801
Hugh Jackson, jun. ..	1802
Charles Metcalfe ..	1803
William Watson, esq.	1804
James Watson, gent.	1805

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	A.D.
James Bellamy, 2d time	1806
Robert Hardwicke, esq.	1807
Steed Girdlestone, gent.	1808
Joseph Medworth ..	1809
William Jump	1810
Rev. Abraham Jobson, D.D. vicar	1811
William Rayner, esq. 2d time	1812
Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, clerk, A.M.	1813
John Edes, esq. 2d time	1814
Hugh Jackson, jun. 2d time	1815
Ralph Archbould, gent.	1816
Edmund Ward ..	1817
H. J. Nicholls, esq. ..	1818

GEORGE IV.

Robert Hardwicke, esq. 3d time	1819
W. Swansborough, gent.	1820
W. Watson, esq. F.S.A.	1821
The like, 3d time ..	1822
Steed Girdlestone, esq. 2d time	1823
J. R. Weatherhead, gent.	1824
James Usill, esq. ..	1825
William Orton, esq. ..	1826

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AGRICULTURE.

THE soil of this district is various, but principally composed of vegetable matter, and in some parts of a clayey texture, being mixed with the alluvia of the upland waters.

All the division of low lands under the denomination of Marsh used to be applied to grazing. The pasture land is exceedingly rich, carrying great quantities of feeding stock. The best lands lie mostly near to the towns: the soil of these has very much the appearance of the rich loams of the inland districts, or such as is found about the sites of monastic ruins, or old manor houses. The superior fertility of the rich grazing lands over the poor does not probably altogether arise from the circumstance of their being higher, or from any original strength of soil, but rather from the great facility of obtaining manure from the neighbouring towns, and from their long and early state of cultivation. Grazing is the most natural application of these lands, and as live cattle and wool can be procured in greater abundance, and consequently cheaper, than in other parts of the kingdom, the cultivators of them were naturally led to employ them in feeding the stock bred in less fertile districts. The land of this description most probably continued in this state for centuries, and so was brought

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down to our times in the close of the last century; but of late years, the "greedy plough" has "preyed on its "carpet." The growing inadequacy of the old arable lands to supply our manufacturing population with bread, as well as to furnish the increasing number of horses with oats, occasioned great advances in the price of corn, which, with the very high price of mustard seed * during the revolutionary war, operated as a great temptation to break up fresh land of any description, wherever it could be found. Although the stronger and better kind of fen and marsh lands, subjected to the plough, has not been so considerably injured as to render them incapable of producing good wheat, yet under the steady and ordinary course of rural affairs, when the prices of grain bear a fair proportion to those of cattle, sheep, and wool, these lands would always be most profitable, used for grazing, could they be restored to grass of their original quality. Notwithstanding a great deal too much of the second-rate lands of the level has been sacrificed to the plough, yet large quantities of the best remain untouched, and it is still, for extent and richness, one of the first grazing districts in the kingdom. In the months of May and June, the rich pastures are so beautifully verdant, and the sheep so thickly studded over the best grazing parts of the level, that they produce a very pleasing sight, and to strangers, new and

* There is an instance of a person in this neighbourhood purchasing three or four acres of ground, which he sowed with mustard seed, and in the first year cleared the fee simple of the land from the produce thereof. £80. per acre has been frequently given for land, which has been broken up for such purpose. This seed is of a very hot nature, and contains a quantity of oil, so that it will lie buried and be uncorrupted for many years, and if cast into the ditches, it will, when re-exposed by their being cleaned out, grow again and flourish well.

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interesting. The good marsh land is particularly famous for the production of long wool, and has the effect of increasing the fleece, both in weight and length of staple, in sheep brought from other quarters.

Quicks, where planted, thrive exceedingly well, but in fen farms, the fences consist of ditches, which, to be kept in a good state, ought to be cleaned out at least once in every five or six years.

The *Sheep* both bred and grazed are of pure long wool, or Lincoln; but the new Leicester, or a cross between the two breeds, are now much encouraged, which cross is found to give a finer wool and a greater inclination in the animal to fatten. Three-years-old wethers of this description average when fattened, from twenty to twenty-eight lbs. per quarter; the fleece eight to ten lbs. The pure Leicester are not at this time in so great request, being of a more delicate constitution. The general proportions allowed for the highland pastures during the summer months are six head of sheep per acre, and during winter, two per acre.

Horses are used for the purpose of husbandry, and are of the large black cart breed, and not so heavy as formerly. The breed of the famous short-legged trotting hackney, formerly held in such high repute, and than which no part of the kingdom produced superior, has been much neglected of late years, and is superseded by the introduction of a cross with the thorough-bred horse, which is now coming into general use.

Neat Stock.—It is with pleasure we observe that the improved short-horn, as well as the Hereford, are very generally to be seen in the neighbourhood.

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Pigs.—Great emulation has been shewn in the breed of swine; the cross between the Chinese and Suffolk, with the occasional mixture of the Neapolitan, is reckoned the best.

Trees.—Altogether an inconsiderable quantity of wood is grown in this district, but the ash and elm thrive well, and we need not add that useful tree around a farm, the willow, which, according to the old saying, "will buy a "horse before an oak will buy a saddle." Willow trees grow to a very large size; one measuring in length upwards of sixty feet, and containing two hundred feet of solid timber, was cut down in Burwash, in Sussex, in 1819, which had been planted fifteen years. From the quantity of willows about Ely, the inhabitants reap considerable profit by making baskets, &c.

Manure is made principally from the straw yards, by the straw stubble and hay in the yards and hovels. The hay and straw produce being generally consumed on the farms where grown, very little attention is paid to the making of dunghills, compared with what is observed in high countries, where the land, being of a poorer quality, requires every assistance of this kind to recruit its exhausted strength. The use of lime as a manure is unknown here; very little artificial manure is wanted, but occasionally, soot and bone dust are used, and a mill is erected in Wisbech for grinding bones, to be disposed of for that purpose.

The salt marshes are remarkably favourable for the growth of corn, but require artificial manure; nor is there at this time any apprehension of the luxuriant produce being destroyed by floods.

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Hemp and Flax are cultivated on the best lands, and to a considerable extent in Upwell, Welney, Outwell, Elm, and Wisbech. The culture of hemp is regarded in a more favourable light than formerly, and so far from being an exhausting crop, its occasional introduction forms part of a system of perpetual cropping, and is proved by experience to be an excellent preparation for a crop of wheat. Flax is cultivated by way of change upon the same, but more commonly upon fresh lands newly broken up. There is a prodigiously fine tract of land about Outwell, which produces flax, as well as onions, in great perfection and abundance.

Beans.—The Heligoland are now superseded by the growth of the Old Tick; the latter giving a much larger produce, and coming earlier to maturity.

Coleseed was until these few years subject to a duty of £10. per last upon importation, which gave some encouragement to its growth in this kingdom, and particularly in this district, for as it arrives at an early maturity, the small farmer can reap this crop and convert it into money, and with the produce be enabled to meet, with much more convenience to himself, the expenses of getting in the approaching wheat harvest. This seed being now imported duty free, the price is become so reduced, that there is not that excitement to cultivate it. It appears that this seed was introduced into this district between 150 and 200 years since;* the price is now about £23. per last.

Woad.—Partial spots in this district are purchased at high prices per acre for the growth of this herb, which

* See page 385, A. D. 1675.

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is used for dyeing; none but the best lands will produce it of sufficient quality for manufacture.

Saffron used to be grown in large quantities, particularly about Outwell.

Mode of Management and Occupation.

The usual rent of farms is from £50. to £600. per annum. Drill husbandry is generally in practice, by which the lands are more easily kept clear from weeds. The general mode of management of the arable land upon the well drained parts of the district is as follows;

1st year, Coleseed, fed off with sheep.
2d year, Crop of oats.
3d year, Crop of wheat with seeds.
Or, two white crops and a green fallow.

In the Fen Lands.—1st year, Plough up and burn, sow with coleseed, and eat off with sheep; sometimes the seed afterwards stands for a crop, and then it is succeeded by wheat, but on no occasion to have more than three crops before the land be again laid down.
2d year, Oats.
3d year, Wheat, if the land is of sufficiently good quality, and safe from inundation.
4th year, Sown with barley, and laid down with seeds for grass for three or four years.

So that about two third parts of a farm always continue in grass and coleseed, and the remainder under plough. The double-hale Yorkshire plough is preferred for the strong clay soils, with two horses abreast. The

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toughness of the fen sward will not suffer it to decay unless burnt. The fen lands are liable at all times to the insect called the wireworm, but particularly so in cold, dry, spring seasons, when they are known to destroy a whole crop:—such is the uncertainty between fen land and high land. It is justly due to the farmers, to state that they are a very active and industrious set of men, and entitled to great praise for their assiduity, skill, and good management of their farms.

Produce.—Wheat from three to four quarters per acre. Oats are a particularly abundant produce, being frequently from twelve to twenty coombs per acre, a considerable quantity of which is exported to the London markets. Thrashing machines are introduced into use; the first of this kind was set up by Messrs. Edes and Nicholls in 1796.

Reaping.—The price of wheat is from 10*s.* 11*s.* to even 14*s.* per acre, according to abundance, and supply of strangers as labourers; oats from 10*s.* to 12*s.* if not mown.

Potatoes are grown in great plenty, and may generally be procured at from two to three guineas per last.

Prices of Labour at this period (1827), 10*s.* to 12*s.* per week in winter, and in summer and in harvest from 15*s.* to 20*s.*

Value of Land to Farm around Wisbech is generally from 30*s.* to 35*s.* per acre; even as high for superior

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land as £2. 10s. per acre. Fen land is as low as 10s. but heavy expenses attend the management of the latter.

The quantity of land in the parish of Wisbech Saint Peter's is 6308A. 1R. 2P. according to Turpin's survey made in the year 1789.

By an account founded on an actual enumeration of the different kinds of stock kept in the year 1807, and submitted to the public by Dr. Jobson, it appears there were at that time

	Wisbech St. Peter's.	Wisbech St. Mary's.	Total.
Sheep	6473	8587	15060
Lambs	1720	2916	4636
Cows	273	261	534
One-year-old Beast and Heifers	144	268	412
Two-years-old Beast	103	283	386
Three-years-old ditto	166	236	402
Ditto upwards of three years old	60	126	186
One-year-old Horses	50	130	180
Two-years-old ditto, exclusive of Horses kept for the saddle	41	134	175

The number of sheep is now greater, and other stock in proportion. The two parishes, including the washes above Guyhirn, banks, and wastes, contain 15,800 acres; of this number, a little more than one half, on the average, is under the plough, and the rest are depastured. It is presumed, that the above account of stock will enable those who are conversant in such matters, to form a due estimate of the fertility of soil and pasturage.

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The neighbourhood of Ely is particularly favourable to the production of garden vegetables and rare plants.*

Wealth, we know, is what constitutes the well-being of a country, and it may with great truth be said, that the wealth and strength of Great Britain originates in the cultivation of the soil, and must always be dependant on that cultivation, whatever other advantages the country may possess; for agriculture is the basis on which the health and strength of the state rests: however profitable commerce and manufactures may be, the agricultural interest is the most valuable and the soundest interest in this country, and ought therefore to be protected and encouraged before all others.

* For the account of the agriculture of the district, the compiler begs to make his acknowledgments to H. J. Nicholls, esq. of Wisbech, one of the conservators of the honourable corporation of Bedford level, whose scientific and practical knowledge in agricultural affairs is well known, and who has been deputed to attend committees of the house of commons on this subject, besides being a zealous promoter of all public measures for the improvement of the country.

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BIOGRAPHY OF WISBECH

AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THERE is a satisfaction in discovering that the place in which we have been many years resident has, in days long past, given birth to some who have been eminent in their age for literature or the arts, and this is more especially the case, if, in the vicissitude of taste and the progress of improvement, obscurity may have stolen over their memory and name: distinguished characters, indeed, demand the tribute of remembrance. It is with a feeling of this sort, we wish to record what can be collected of the biography of persons of any memorable distinction, among the natives or inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood.

A.D. 1340. JOHN DE WISBECHE, one of the monks* of the church of Ely, is with commendation recorded to have had the oversight of the lady chapel at Ely, on the north side of the cathedral, whilst that noble edifice was building, in the time of bishop Montacute.

* The difference between a monk and a friar is this: the first is one of those belonging to a monastery endowed with lands for its support; but a friar is one whose monastery had rarely any more land or estate than the bare situation of the house and garden, and who lived by the daily alms of the people in the neighbourhood.

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Another JOHN DE WISBECHE was first prior of Frieston, near Boston, in the county of Lincoln, and afterwards elected abbot of Croyland, upon the death of abbot Lyttleington, 13th February 1469. He made several improvements in the buildings belonging to Croyland abbey, and completed the state apartment; he also built the infirmary and great granary at Croyland, and did much towards completing and beautifying the abbey. He gave a house to the chamberlain to pay four shillings on Christmas-day annually, quatenus ad reparationem conventus in eorum munitionibus.* Amongst other things, he obtained from the pope a bull to allow the eating of meat in Lent: he died the 14th November 1476. After his time, nothing more than necessary repairs was done to the abbey. Its dissolution took place in 1539. A.D. 1469.

RICHARD HERLOCK, born at Wisbech, is said to have been well educated: he wrote a book called "The "English A B C," and dedicated the same to Thomas Goodericke, bishop of Ely and chancellor of England. Some thought him indiscreet in presenting so low a subject to so high a person, as if he would teach the greatest statesman in the land to spell aright; others excuse him, saying, though his book was of low title, yet it was of general use to the lower people, who then began to betake themselves to reading, which had been long neglected in this kingdom, so that many who had one foot in the grave had their hand on the primer. The book, however, is said to have treated on the ground of religion. 1552.

* Gough's Croyland. Nobody in Peterborough abbey could be let blood, (accipere munitionem) an operation so necessary to sedentary people subject to repletion, without an order from the prior, who let some of them have it often, some more rarely.

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A.D. 1603. RICHARD ATKINS, of Outwell, who lived about this period, was such an eminent commissioner of sewers, that his manuscripts have constantly been allowed as evidence. He was a man of great learning and experience, and, as Sir William Dugdale says, a notable observer of the fens, having written several valuable manuscripts on that subject. He was consulted by all the engineers and surveyors of the works of sewers in his time.

1616. JOHN THURLOE, esq. son of the Rev. Thomas Thurloe, though not a native of Wisbech, spent a great portion of his time in his residence at the castle there, and was a liberal benefactor to the town; he was educated for the law, and in 1645, was secretary to the parliamentary commissioners at the treaty of Uxbridge. Though connected with the republican leaders, and favouring the cause of the commonwealth, he was not accessary to the king's death. In 1650, he was chosen one of the company of undertakers for draining the Bedford level before mentioned.* Upon Oliver Cromwell's obtaining the protectorate, he was made secretary of state, in which employment he was continued by Richard, his successor, over whom he had great influence. In 1658, he was chosen to serve as representative for the town of Wisbech, but he made his election to serve for Cambridge, for which place also he had been returned. At the restoration, though he had made a tender of his services to the king before that event absolutely took place, he was accused of high treason, but soon set at liberty; he died suddenly in Lincolnshire, in 1668, aged 51. He was married thrice, first into the family of Peyton. In his character, he is said to have been very amiable,

* See page 44.

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and remarkable for his courtesy and mildness to persons of all parties. His state papers, in seven volumes, folio, deposited in the Bodleian library at Oxford, are valuable.

Sir EDWARD PEYTON, baronet, was the author of a book called "The Divine Catastrophe of the Kingly "Family of the House of Stuarts." The title-page is sufficient to show in what spirit the book was written. Sir Edward seems to have been an enthusiast of the fifth monarchy sort. See Woods' Ath. Oxon. vol. ii., page 156. Among the Harleian MSS. in the British museum, is a volume which contains some anecdotes of the same Sir Edward Peyton. Harl. MSS. No. 6395. A.D. 1652.

THOMAS HERRING, archbishop of Canterbury, the son of the Rev. John Herring, rector of Walsoken, was educated at Wisbech school; he was elected fellow of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge, in 1716, and became tutor there. In 1722, he was made chaplain to Fleetwood, bishop of Ely, and four years after chosen preacher at Lincoln's inn, about which time he took his degree of D.D. In 1731, he was made dean of Rochester; in 1737, bishop of Bangor, and in 1743, translated to York. At the breaking out of the rebellion in 1745, the archbishop exerted himself most actively to rouse the people to a sense of their duty, and upon this occasion made his eloquent appeal at York to the volunteers,* 1716.

* This animated speech of the archbishop is scarce to be met with; it was originally introduced by a print, at the top, of the archbishop in his robes, engraved by Baron, from a painting by the celebrated Hogarth. It has never appeared in any authentic history, but the compiler is afforded the opportunity of presenting it to the public through the kindness of his valued friend, the Rev. Dr. Sutton, of Norwich.

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which is most worthy of being recorded, not only on account of its spirit, but its peculiar application, in one respect, at the present crisis, and was in the following words:

"*My Lords, Gentlemen, my Reverend Brethren of the Clergy,*

"I am desired by the lords lieutenants of the several ridings, to open to you the reasons of our present assembling; and as the advertisement which has called us together is in every body's hands, and the fact now speaks itself too plainly, a few words will be sufficient on the occasion. It was some time before it was believed, (I would to God it had gained credit sooner) but now every child knows it, that the Pretender's son is in Scotland; has set up his standard there; has gathered and disciplined an army of great force; receives daily increase of numbers; is in possession of the capital city there; has defeated a small part of the king's forces, and is advancing with hasty steps towards England. What will be the issue of this rapid progress, must be left to the providence of God. However, what is incumbent upon us to do, is to make the best provision we can against it; and every gentleman, I dare say, every man in England, will think it his wisdom and his interest to guard against the mischievous attempts of these wild and desperate ruffians.

"But the great mischief to be feared, which ought to alarm us exceedingly, and put us immediately on our defence, is the certain evidence which every day opens more and more, that those commotions in the north are but part of a great plan concerted for our ruin. They have began under the countenance, and will be supported by the forces of France and Spain, our old and inveterate

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and (late experience calls upon me to add) our savage and blood-thirsty enemies; a circumstance that should fire the indignation of every honest Englishman. If these designs should succeed, and popery and arbitrary power come in upon us, under the influence and direction of these two tyrannical and corrupted courts, I leave you to reflect what would become of every thing valuable to us! We are now blest with the mild administration of a just and protestant king, who is of so strict an adherence to the laws of our country, that not an instance can be pointed out during his whole reign, wherein he made the least attempt upon the liberty, or property, or religion of a single person. But if the ambition and pride of France and Spain are to dictate to us, we must submit to a man to govern us under their hated and accursed influence, who brings his religion from Rome, and the rules and maxims of his government from Paris and Madrid: for God's sake, gentlemen, let us consider this matter as becomes us, and let no time be lost to guard against this prodigious ruin. To your immortal honour be it spoken, you have considered it, and are now met together to call in the unanimous consent and assistance of this great county. This county, as it exceeds every other for its extent and riches, so it very naturally takes the lead of the inferior ones. And it will be extremely to our credit; give courage to the friends of the best constitution in the world; damp the spirit of its enemies at home, (if any such can be perceived in Britain at this dangerous crisis) and be an instruction to those abroad, that there is still spirit and honesty enough among us to stand up in defence of our common country. This will be the use of an unanimous and hearty declaration of fidelity to our country, and loyalty to our king. But the times, gentlemen, call for something more than this; something must be done as

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well as said; and the fund for our defence already begun, and now to be proposed to this great assembly, will, it is hoped, from reasons of publick example and publick safety, meet with the hearty concurrence of every individual that composes it. And at the same time that your hearts go along with the association, your hands will be open to support the necessary measures of self defence. As to you, my reverend brethren, I have not long had the honour to preside among you; but from the experience I have had, and what I have always heard of your honest love to your country, (if you permit me to say so) I will be your security to the publick, that you will decline no pains to instruct and animate your people, nor expense, according to your circumstances, to stand up against popery and arbitrary power, under a French or Spanish government. We scorn the policies of the court of Rome, have no interests separate from the people, but on every occasion, where our country is concerned, look upon ourselves as incorporated with the warmest defenders of it; or, if we do desire to be distinguished, it will be by our ardour and zeal to preserve our happy constitution. Let us unite then, gentlemen, as one man, to stop this dangerous mischief, from which union no man surely can withdraw or withhold his assistance, who is not listed into the wicked service of a French or Spanish invasion, or wholly unconcerned for the fate of his bleeding country. May the great God of battles stretch out his all-powerful hand to defend us; inspire an union of hearts and hands among all ranks of people, a clear wisdom into the councils of his majesty, and a steady courage and resolution into the hearts of his generals!"

This speech was received with such general applause, that £40,000. was raised for the defence of the country,

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which was immediately seconded by the kingdom. For these services he was raised to Canterbury, after archbishop Potter, in 1747. He enjoyed the see ten years, and died in 1757, and was said to be as amiable in private as respected in public life.* He expended £6000. in the repairs of Lambeth and Croydon palaces, and was a noble contributor to several charities. His sermons and letters on public occasions have been published.

SIGISMUND TRAFFORD, esq. who died in 1740, wrote an essay on draining, particularly of the Bedford level. A.D. 1729.

Dr. HENRY SOUTHWELL, the reputed author of a commentary on the Old and New Testament, called "Dr. Southwell's Family Bible." It has, however, been said, that it was not written by him, but that he sold his name to some London booksellers for a certain pecuniary consideration, and they employed one Dr. Saunders to do the work. However, it brought no small gain to the publishers, having a great run. The Southwell family were for many years highly respectable in Wisbech; the last of the name, Henry Southwell, esq. died in 1762, leaving two daughters his co-heiresses, one of whom married Dr. Warren, bishop of Bangor, and the other, Sir James Eyre, lord chief justice of the Common Pleas, whose widow died in the month of November 1825, at the age of 76.

* A collateral descendant of the venerable archbishop Herring is now living at Wisbech, Mr. H. Herring, who carries on the profession of a surgeon and apothecary there, and is admired for his professional talents, as well as for his uprightness, integrity, and mildness of manners.

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A.D. 1730. BEAUPRE BELL, esq. of Beaupre Hall, in Outwell, who married the daughter of Sir John Oldfield, baronet, though an eccentric character, had a great knowledge of antiquities.* The register of the Spalding Antiquarian Society abounds with proofs of Mr. Bell's taste and knowledge in ancient coins, both Greek and Roman, as well as of his many interesting discoveries: he died in 1736.

1740. BEAUPRE BELL, his son, also distinguished himself as an antiquarian; he died young of a consumption in 1741, and left various medals, seals, drawings, and coins, to Trinity college, Cambridge.

1752. The Rev. BROCK RAND, chaplain to Thomas Green, bishop of Ely, rector of Leverington and of Newton, near Wisbech, was an industrious antiquary, and collected a list of the incumbents in each parish in the dioceses of Ely and Norwich, with memoranda of such of the parishes as were to be met with in the registers of the bishops of Norwich and Ely. This very curious and valuable book was bound up, and formed a thick quarto volume, which, after Mr. Rand's death, came into the hands of his friend, the Rev. Mr. Dickenson, minister of Leverington Parson Drove chapel, by whom it was consigned to the care of the master and fellows of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge, of which society Mr. Rand had been a member. The MS. continued safe in their custody until within this year or two, but has now by some mischance disappeared, and there is but little hope of its recovery. The inqui-

* Further particulars relating to Beaupre Bell are contained in the description of "Outwell," amongst the circumjacent villages.

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sitions taken in the time of Hugh de Northwold, who lived in the reign of Henry III. are said to have been very curious in pointing out old customs and tenures.

HENRY BURROUGHS, LL.D. vicar of Wisbech and prebendary of Peterborough, was the author of sermons on several subjects and occasions, which were printed in the year 1770, from a private press of his own. A.D. 1770.

JOHN WARREN, D.D. vicar of this parish, was first translated to Bangor in 1789. He married the daughter of Henry Southwell, esq. of Wisbech, in 1777, died 27th January 1800, and was interred in Westminster abbey. He was a prelate of the greatest application to business, undoubted talents, candour, and integrity, and he was fully acquainted with, and discharged the duties of his station, in a manner that shewed his sense of its high importance. 1777.

The Hon. and Rt. Rev. CHARLES, lord bishop of Kildare, a younger son of the earl of Balcarras, was educated at Wisbech school. He first became vicar of Wisbech, and having accompanied the rt. hon. the earl of Hardwicke, K.G. when viceroy of Ireland, to that country, as his chaplain and private secretary, he was made bishop of Killaloe, and afterwards translated to the bishopric of Kildare, which he now holds. 1780.

THOMAS CLARKSON, esq. was a native of this town; his unparalleled exertions in behalf of the oppressed Africans, and for the abolition of the slave trade, are so well known, that the name of "Clarkson" must be placed very high among the modern sons of Britain, as the real friend of his country, and the benefactor of the

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human race. He now resides at Playford Hall, in Suffolk, and is still animated with the same genial spirit; for very recently, (in the year 1824) this worthy man, in his zeal to rouse the exertions of his countrymen to rescue the present negroes from their degraded state, so repulsive and contrary to every principle both of the British constitution and the Christian religion, visited almost every county in England, travelling in the space of seven months nearly 4000 miles, in furtherance of that benevolent object.

Music, as well as all other arts, is chiefly descended from the ancients, both vocal and instrumental music being highly cultivated and admired in Greece. It no doubt received much influence from its admission into the religious ceremonies of the first Christians, by the chaunting of the different parts of the liturgy, as hymns, psalms, &c. The music and words of one of their pieces of composition is admired even to the present time, the celebrated canticle of the "Te Deum."

A.D. 1789. Mr. GEORGE GUEST, an inhabitant of Wisbech, is a gentleman of great merit in that department. His name has been noticed in a recent biographical history of musicians. He was son of Mr. Ralph Guest, of Bury, and being very early instructed in the rudiments of music by his father, manifested a great precocity of musical talent and capability. When no more than two years old, he began to practice the didactic scale; at three, he could sing "God save the King;" at five, he sung in public at St. James' church, Bury, Handel's song, "He "shall feed his Flock," accompanied by a full band; at seven, he took the first treble at the opening of the organ at Stow Market; here he attracted the notice

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of the late Mr. Taylor, organist of Chelmsford, by whom he was reccommended to Dr. Nares, who, after having heard him sing some of Handel's music, appointed him to a situation among the boys in the king's chapel. In this excellent school he made great proficiency in musical knowledge, and so distinguished himself by his skill in singing, that he was brought to sing two songs in an oratorio performed before his late majesty George III. Upon this occasion, the late revered king, who is well known to have been an excellent judge of music, expressed great approbation, and gave commands that he should always sing songs in the succeeding oratorios.

In 1787, he left the king's chapel to undertake the organ at Eye, where he remained only two years, being in 1789 appointed to the organ recently erected by Green at Wisbech. For this office there were at first no fewer than nineteen candidates; but when it was understood that Mr. Guest was one, and that they were to undergo an examination by Dr. Randall, in St. Mary's church, Cambridge, they all withdrew their claims except three. Mr. Guest, having performed several difficult pieces of music, was recommended to the capital burgesses of Wisbech by Dr. Randall, and by them accepted. He has ever since resided in Wisbech, where he is celebrated as a teacher of the piano-forte, and as an extemporary performer on the organ. Mr. Guest is the author of a variety of musical publications, which have been well received; amongst others, six grand pieces for a full military band, as well as several admired glees, duets, and songs.

JAMES NASMITH, D.D. a former rector of Leverington, was a divine and antiquary, born in 1740, and educated at Corpus Christi college, Cambridge: he published an A.D. 1808.

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edition of the "Itineraries of Symon, son of Simeon, "and William of Worcester," and of "Tanner's Notitia "Monastica." He formed a catalogue of the manuscripts in archbishop Parker's library, in the same college of Corpus Christi, which was printed at the university press in 1777, at the expense of the college; besides which, he published a charge delivered by him as chairman of the quarter sessions at Wisbech, in 1799, on the duties of overseers of the poor, and an examination of the statutes in force relating to the assize of bread. He died at Leverington in 1808, and was buried in the chancel there.

Major-General THOMAS HARDWICKE, the brother of Dr. Hardwicke, of Wisbech, has generally spent the period of his relaxation from public duties at this place, so that he may almost be considered as one of its inhabitants. His public services claim considerable respect. He entered early into the royal artillery in the East India company's service, on the Bengal establishment, and was appointed lieutenant and fire-worker in September 1778. In 1794 he was made captain, and major in July 1804; lieutenant-colonel in September following; colonel in the regiment 21st April 1817, and major-general in 1819. In September 1781, this officer marched with the detachment from Bengal, under the command of colonel Pearse, to join the army at Madras, commanded by Sir Eyre Coote.* He was present in August 1781, at the siege and capture of Trepasore, and in the battle

* See the "Royal Military Calendar, containing the services and progress "of the Generals, Colonels, and Majors of the army, according to seniority, "(1820):" but a blunder is here committed; the fact being, that lieutenant Hardwicke marched from Bengal in February 1781, and joined the army near Madras in August following; in the same month, the battle of Perinbancum and the siege of Trepasore occurred.

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of Perinbaucum, against the army of Hyder Ally. In September, he was in the action with the same army on the plains of Sholinghur; in November, at the capture of Chettore, in the Polums; and in the cannonade, 10th January 1782, of the Swamps, on the march to relieve Vellore. In June 1783, he was at the assault on the French lines at Cuddalore, and engaged in the trenches, when attacked by that garrison. In 1790, he proceeded with a detachment of Bengal artillery, to join the army at Madras under the command of general Sir William Medows; was present at the capture of the several forts of Carvor, Dæraporum, Ariva-coochy, Erode, Caunbatour, and Settimangalum. He was with colonel Hoyd's detachment in the cannonade of 13th September, against the army of Tippoo Sultaun, and at the action of the following day near Shaoen, on the march to form a re-junction with general Medows. He was in the attack of 15th March 1791, on Tippoo's lines before Seringapatam, and at the taking of Ooliadroog on the 18th June. In December 1795, he was at the investiture of Severndroog, and in the same month appointed commissary of ordnance by lord Cornwallis, and put in charge of the magazines of Bangalore. In 1793, he returned to Bengal, and was by lord Cornwallis appointed adjutant and quarter-master of artillery. He was present in 1794, in the Rohilla battles in Rohilcund, near Belowra, then holding the rank of captain. In 1797, he was appointed commissary of ordnance, in which situation he continued until declining health obliged him to return to Europe in 1803. He, however, again returned to Bengal in 1806. On 5th July 1816, he was appointed acting commandant of the regiment of Bengal artillery, and his promotion to the rank of major-general bears date the 20th August 1819. On the 26th February

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1820, this gallant officer was appointed to the staff, as commandant of artillery, consisting of three battalions of European foot artillery, and one brigade of six troops of horse artillery, which command he held until his return to Europe in January 1824.*

* The compiler has for many years enjoyed the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with major-general Hardwicke, and it affords him the highest satisfaction to subjoin the following paragraph, extracted from the government gazette of Madras, dated 1st January 1824, according, as it so fully does in every respect, with his own sentiments, as of all who know the general's public and private character. "December 18th 1823. This "morning a little after gun-fire, major-general Hardwicke, late commandant "of the artillery, embarked on board the steam boat Diana, for the purpose "of joining the honourable company's ship, 'Thomas Grenville,' at Saujor, "from the sea gate to Fort William, under a salute of thirteen guns from "the batteries, in which ship, the general, accompanied by the Rev. J. "Parson, late senior precedency chaplain, Mrs. Parson, and family, is pro-"ceeding to England. The gallant general originally came to this country "in the year 1778, and now returns home, after a period of nearly half a "century, during which he has filled several of the most important offices "in the military department of the state, with the greatest credit to his "reputation, and with the approbation of successive governors, while he "has recommended himself to all by his urbanity and polished manners. He "leaves us, deeply regretted by all his friends: enemies, we firmly believe, "he has none." The general has also, in an eminent degree, cultivated the belles-lettres amidst the din of arms, and is fellow of a society called the Royal Asiatic Society, recently established. This institution is at present in its infancy, but well deserves, and is daily receiving encouragement from enlightened persons, who view with interest any attempt towards the advancement of science or the diffusion of useful knowledge. A large and commodious room in Grafton Street, London, is engaged by the society for their deliberations, as well as to form a museum of interesting oriental curiosities, in which is a considerable collection of Burmese idols and other curiosities, taken from a Burmese temple of worship in the late war; and a committee is appointed "for foreign correspondence, in order to open a "constant and easy channel of communication between the society in "England, and individuals who cultivate a taste for the arts, science, and "polite literature, but who may be stationed or temporarily residing in "various quarters of the globe."

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We cannot close this biography, without noticing a character, who, though not a native of Wisbech, spent his early life in a humble sphere in this town, and has since exerted his talents in the cause of Christianity, so as to benefit the world at large.

Mr. William Ellis, though born in London in 1794, was brought by his parents to Wisbech at the age of four years. He enjoyed none of the advantages of education beyond the commonest rudiments, nor do his juvenile years furnish any thing remarkable to interest. At the age of twelve, he left his father's house, and took up his abode with a farmer about fourteen miles distant, where he remained about three years, when, acquiring a taste for botany, he engaged with a gardener in the country; but in October 1811, removing to London, he spent a year in a nursery ground at Kingsland, and continued there for the two following years; during this period he devoted his mind to study, and receiving some serious impressions of religion, his attention became directed to "Missionary labours." We know that strong mental powers and intellectual energy, besides piety and zeal, are requisite to an undertaking of this nature, and these qualifications he seemed to possess; for having offered himself to the London church missionary society, and undergone the customary and necessary examination, he received directions in January 1815 to proceed to the South Sea Islands, his wife accompanying him, and reached Eimeo, one of the Society Islands, four leagues west of Otaheite, on 13th February 1817. Mr. Ellis having made himself acquainted with the Taheitean language, which bears a close affinity to that of the Society Islands, was invited to visit the Sandwich Islands, whose inhabitants are a most inoffen-

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sive, hospitable, and kind-hearted people, in order that he might propagate the doctrines of Christianity there; and much of the advance which these islanders have made is doubtless to be ascribed in a great measure to the happy natural disposition with which they appear to be almost universally endowed. Already they have overthrown the shrines of their idols, and there is now scarcely a pagan image, or even a pagan rite, to be found amongst them; they feel the propriety of covering their persons, and of assuming our costume, and evince a ready inclination towards civilized life. Mr. Ellis, after becoming a resident at Hawaii, (Owyhee*) made a tour of that island, of which an interesting account has been published by him. In the year 1824, Mrs. Ellis' health induced him to think of returning to his native land,-where she might receive medical assistance, which the Sandwich Islands did not afford.

About the period of his intending to return to his native country, the king and queen of the Sandwich Islands had resolved to visit the British dominions, and Mr. Ellis was to have accompanied them when they took their departure for England, but a passage could not then be procured for him. Mr. Ellis, in his character of missionary, had made a sincere impression on the king and queen of Hawaii, as is shewn by their conversion to Christianity, and abolishing their national idolatry. It is a strong proof that the king possessed great decision of character, by his undertaking a long and hazardous voyage to this country: this expedition was prompted by an earnest desire on his part to see for himself countries of which he had heard such various and

* Where captain Cook lost his life.

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interesting accounts; to have a personal interview with his majesty the king of Great Britain; to obtain a better knowledge of the nature of commercial transactions, and to make arrangements with the British government, for confirming the cession of the Sandwich Islands, and for placing himself and his dominions under British protection, and finally to make himself acquainted with our institutions. The king, Tamehameha, and his queen, Tamehamalu, with their suite, accordingly left the South Seas, and arrived in London on the 20th May 1824, and took up their abode at the Caledonian hotel, Adelphi. They attended the public amusements, and visited the theatres, dressed in the European manner, and a time was appointed for their introduction to his majesty king George IV. Whilst waiting for this ceremony, Tamehamaha, his queen, and most of their suite, were seized with the measles; every attention and respect was paid to them; the king sent his own physician to attend them, and it was hoped their majesties were recovering, when inflammation ensued, and terminated in their death; the queen on the 8th July, and the king six days after. The government paid due honours to their remains, and the Blonde frigate, captain lord Byron, was ordered to convey them, with their suite, to the Sandwich Islands. Although the melancholy death of the king and queen prevented the accomplishment of the objects so fully as might have been wished, yet no unfriendly feeling is likely to be entertained by the people as to the cause of it, for though the intelligence was received in their own country with sorrow, yet the hospitable manner in which the king and queen were received and treated while they lived, the high respect paid to their remains, and other tokens of friendship, not only prevented suspicion, but appear to have confirmed the attachment and confidence felt

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by his suite towards England. A younger brother about ten years of age is the successor. The narrative above alluded to, which Mr. Ellis has published, is very interesting, and cannot fail to awaken respect for the office of the Christian missionary, and to exhibit the author as a man of correct observation and enlightened philanthropy: it is entitled, "A Narrative of a "Tour through Hawaii, or Owhyhee, with Remarks on "the History, Traditions, Manners, Customs, and Lan-"guage of the Inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands."

In a work entitled "Blome's Britannia," published in 1673, an enumeration is made of some of the principal families then resident in Cambridgeshire, which are as follows:

IN WISBECH,
Anthony Buckworth, esq.
Thomas Edwards, esq.
Anthony Fisher, esq.
Matthias Taylor, esq.

IN ELM,
Robert Balam, esq.

IN ELY,
William Wren, esq. chief bailiff of the isle of Ely.
Charles Wren, esq.
William Balam, esq.
Henry Hitch, Dr. of Law.
Robert Wright, esq.

IN COTON,
Simon Watson, esq.

IN DODDINGTON,
Sir Sewster Peyton, bart.

IN MARCH,
Roger Jennings, esq.

IN CHATTERIS,
Michael Hollman, esq.

IN LITTLEPORT,
Edward Parthericke, esq.

IN NEWTON,
William Colvile, esq.

IN OUTWELL,
John Fincham, esq.

IN UPWELL,
Peter Dimond, esq.

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High-Sheriffs for the Counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon, whose Residences were in Wisbech and the Neighbourhood, since 1st Henry VIII. 1509, to the year 1826 inclusive.

A.D.
1523 Anthony Hansard, esq. March
1529 Ditto
1593 John Peyton, esq. Isleham
1595 Robert Brudenell, esq. Doddington
1604 Sir John Peyton, bart. ditto
1628 Thomas Parke, esq. Wisbech
1631 Richard Colvile, esq. Newton
1634 Robert Balam, esq. Elm
1647 Tristram Dimond, esq. Upwell
1653 W. Fisher, esq. Wisbech
1660 W. Colvile, esq. Newton
1666 J. Caryll, esq. Chatteris
1672 Richard Read, esq. Whittlesea
1675 C. Turner, esq. ditto
1678 T. Wiseman, esq. ditto
1681 Robert Swaine, esq. Leverington
1696 T. Harrison, esq. March
1699 Richard Parlett Read, esq. Chatteris
1705 J. Walsham, esq. March
1708 John Jenyns, esq. Doddington

A.D.
1711 J. Taylor, esq. Wisbech
1714 John Marshall, junior, esq. ditto
1717 Roger Laxon, esq. Whittlesea
1723 T. Jenkinson, esq. Elm
1729 James Anthony, esq. Wisbech
1732 George Waddington, esq. Doddington
1735 Jer. Riss, esq. Thorney
1738 R. Colvile, esq. Newton
1744 R. Gill, esq. Upwell
1750 John Sumpter, esq. Walsoken
1754 Henry Southwell, esq. Wisbech
1757 F. Dixon, esq. Upwell
1760 Sir P. Vavazor, knt. Wisbech
1763 Isaac Young, esq. ditto
1766 J. Goddard, esq. Elm
1769 J. Collier, esq. March
1775 Daniel Swaine, esq. Leverington
1781 John Johnson, esq. ditto
1784 Thomas Shepheard, esq. March
1790 Thomas Ground, esq. Whittlesea

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A.D.		A.D.	
1793	Thomas Cole, esq. Doddington	1811	William Dunn Gardner, esq. Chatteris
1796	John Gardiner, esq. Chatteris	1820	Thomas Burgess, esq. Benwick
1799	J. Westwood, esq. ditto	1823	William Rayner, esq. Wisbech
1802	Thomas Aveling, esq. Whittlesea	1826	Thomas Fryer, esq. Chatteris
1805	J. Marshall, esq. Elm		
1808	Sir H. Peyton, bart. Emneth		

So that in 317 years there have been nine sheriffs selected from .... Wisbech
Six ditto ..... March
Six ditto ..... Whittlesea
Six ditto ..... Chatteris
Five ditto .... Doddington
Four ditto ..... Elm
Three ditto from .. Newton
Three ditto .. Leverington
Three ditto ..... Upwell
One ditto ..... Thorney
One ditto ..... Benwick
One ditto ..... Emneth
One ditto ..... Walsoken
One ditto ..... Isleham.

A few of the Plants growing in this County.

Althea Officinalis—Marsh Mallow.
Aloe Palustris—Water Sengreen, or Fresh-water Soleur.
Agrostis Stolenifera—Common Couchgrass.
Atrope Belladama—Deadly Nightshade.
Arenarea Marina—Sea Sandwort, sold as Samphire.
Artes Tripolium—Sea Starwort.
Artimonia Maritima—Sea Wormwood.
Carum Carve—Carraways.

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Carduus Acaulis—Dwarf Carline Thistle.
Crocus—Saffron, formerly much cultivated in this county.
Camelina—Treacle Wormseed, in the osier holts.
Conyza Palustris—Bird's Tongue, about Chatteris.
Caltha Palustris—Marsh Marigold.
Caryophillus Holosteus—Stickwort, in the fens.
Eleaginus Cordi—Sweet Willow, in the low parts of the isle; this used to be put among clothes to communicate a sweet scent.
Frankenia Levis—Sea Heath.
Glycyrrhiza Vulgaris—Liquorice, formerly planted in great quantities in Elm.
Isatis—Woad.
Menyanthes Nymphoides—Fringed Water Lily.
———— Trifoliata—Marsh Trefoil.
Millefolium Palustre—Hooded Water Milfoil, in the ditches.
———— Aquaticum—Horse-tail Water Milfoil, in stagnating waters.
Mymphea Lutea—Yellow Water Lily.
Potentilla Anserina—Silver Weed, or Goose Grass.
Ranunculus Flammeus Major—Great Spear Wort, in the ditches.
Statice Armeria—Thrift.
Stratoites Aloide—Water Aloe.
Scordium—Water Germander, in osier holts about Ely.
Sysimbrum Sylvestre—Creeping Water Rocket.
Sanchus Palustris—Marsh Sow Thistle.
Triticum Repens—Couch Grass.
Valeriana Diorca—Marsh Valerian.

The isle of Ely is divided into four hundreds and thirty-two parishes or hamlets, as follows:

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Hundreds.	Parishes.	Population in each Parish in 1821.	No. of Parishes in each Hund.	Population in each Hundred.
Ely	Ely Trinity and College	3528		
	Ely St. Mary's and Stuntney	1460		
	Littleport	2364		
	Downham	1350	4	8702
South Part of Witchford	Witchford	401		
	Witcham	473		
	Coveney.....	325		
	Wentworth	139		
	Mepal	406		
	Manea	657		
	Sutton	1157		
	Haddenham	1725		
	Wilburton	465		
	Stretham	875		
	Thetford	229	11	6852
North Part of Witchford	March	3850		
	Wimblington	859		
	Doddington	676		
	Benwick	514		
	Chatteris	3283	5	9182
Wisbech ..	Wisbech St. Peter's ..	6515		
	Wisbech St. Mary's ..	1362		
	Leverington	848		
	Parson Drove	675		
	Newton	368		
	Tid St. Giles.....	781		
	Elm	1368		
	Outwell	398		
	Upwell	1148		
	Welney&WelchesDam	468	10	13931
Liberties of	Whittlesea	5276		
	and Thorney	1970	2	7246
		Total	32	45913

In Ely, and South Part of Witchford	15,554
North Part of Witchford, Wisbech, and Liberties of Whittlesea and Thorney	30,359
	45,913

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HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

PARISHES IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF WISBECH;

COMMENCING WITH

WISBECH SAINT MARY'S,

SITUATE in the fields, about two miles north-west of the town of Wisbech Saint Peter's. On the north brink of the great river, between St. Peter's and St. Mary's, stood an ancient mansion, called "White Hall," heretofore the residence of a family of some note of the name of Everard, settled here as early as A.D. 1300. The name of John Everard, esq. occurs in certain presentments relative to straitening the river, in 1438;* and when king Edward VI. granted the charter to the town of Wisbech, Richard Everard, esq. was therein nominated one of the ten men, his name standing second, and next to the brother of the then lord bishop.† An heiress of the Everard line

* Dugdale, p. 318. See page 33. This family had very considerable possessions in Wisbech and the neighbourhood, and the name is often mentioned in old presentments. Fitton hall, in Leverington, belonged to this family.

† See page 174. Also, Richard Everard, esq. in 1566, gave, by his will, his manor of Fitton's, in Wiggenhall St. German's, in Marshland, to John Everard, on whose death without issue, Henry Everard, of Linstead, in Suffolk, his cousin, is stated to have become his heir. Parkins, p. 310.

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intermarried with Buckworth, which transferred this estate into the latter family. In 1599, the name of Everard Buckworth, esq. occurs amongst the capital burgesses of Wisbech. Theophilus Buckworth, bishop of Dromore, in Ireland, is said to have died at Whitehall in the year 1652; and dame Esther, widow of Sir John Buckworth, died possessed of this estate in 1691. In 1703, Thomas Buckworth, and Elizabeth, his wife, sold the manor and estate of White Hall to Mr. Robert Harris, of London.* The title-deeds, which are preserved, describe this property as "all that manor, or site of a "manor, or manor house, called White Hall, with the "courts, profits, and perquisites of courts," &c. The estate remained in the family of Harris until 1786, when it passed by will to the late Christopher Hand, esq.† of Cheveley, in the county of Cambridge, whose widow is now in possession of it. The old hall was taken down about the year 1807, and the materials employed in building a modern farm house, still retaining the name of White Hall, which, with the estate, is now in the occupation of Mr. Thomas Moore, an intelligent, upright, and honest man. With the writings of this estate is a deed (without date) under the hand and seal of Thomas Buckworth, relative to a right which probably had been exercised in more ancient times, and then by him renewed, whereby, in consideration of two pounds, he granted "all those his swans and cygnets, white and "grey, marked with the anchor,‡ swimming, remaining,

* His monument in Wisbech church is mentioned in page 267.

† Mr. Hand married a daughter of Martin Folkes, esq. an ancestor of the present baronet. The family of Folkes formerly resided at Cheveley, of whom there are several memorials in the parish church.

‡ No person may have a swan mark, except he have lands of the yearly value of five marks, and unless it be by grant of the king, or his officers lawfully authorized, or by prescription. Statute 22d Edward IV. cap. 6.

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" or being in, upon, or about the river of Owse, in the " isle of Ely, or in, upon, or about any other river or " rivers, brooks, waters, or places, within the said county " of Cambridge, or elsewhere, within the kingdom of " England; and all rights, royalties, &c. to the said " swans and cygnets, and gains of swans and cygnets " in any wise belonging, together with the aforesaid " swan marks, * for the use of the said Robert Harris, " his heirs, and assigns for ever." † A certain part of the turnpike road, between Wisbech Saint Mary's and the adjoining town of Thorney beyond Guyhirn, is called Peakirk drove; ‡ which causeway most probably took its name from Pega, the sister of St. Guthlac, a celebrated saint, born A. D. 673. The earlier years of this saint were employed in the exercise of arms, and military studies. Tired, however, with this laborious calling, Guthlac bade adieu to war and bloodshed, and declared he would no longer fight under any other banner than that of religion. No argument could dissuade him from his resolution, and in A. D. 697, he retired to the famous monastery of Repton, in Derbyshire, and aiming at still greater austerities, determined to lead an eremitical life, choosing for his place of retirement the isle of Croyland, at that time an uninhabited place. St. Guthlac had by this time obtained great reputation for his sanctity, and was in high esteem with king Ethelbald. At the

* Swans on the Thames have for ages been protected as royal property. If a wild swan is taken, and marked, and turned loose in the river, the owner's property in him still continues, and it is not lawful for any one else to take him. *Blackstone's Commentaries*, vol. ii. p. 392.

† The information relative to White Hall was kindly furnished by T. Ireland, esq. of Staples Inn.

‡ It was sometimes called Black drove, from the nature of the soil, being of that colour. See also page 113.

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expiration of fifteen years from the time St. Guthlac took possession of the hermitage, his life terminated, and in A. D. 714 this christian hero breathed his last. His sister Pega took the proper care of his interment, and king Ethelbald founded and endowed the abbey at Crowland to his honor. She had also a religious house or cell* dedicated to her; which was demolished in early times, and absorbed in the larger one of Peterborough. A village near the site of this cell, lying about six miles N.N.W. from Peterborough, between the property of the Thorney and Crowland abbies, appears also to have been indebted to her for its name, "Pea-kirk," that is to say, "Pega's Church."

The church of Wisbech St. Mary's is a neat building of stone, consisting of a square tower, in which hang five bells, on it is a small leaden spire, and cross of lead; the side aisles are separated from the nave by four wide arches, over each of which is one of those grotesque figures, so often observable in ancient churches. The nave and north aisle are covered with lead, and the south with slate. The interior of the church is neatly fitted up with pews, all of which are painted of an uniform wainscot colour, and the floors of the respective seats are made comfortable, by being covered with boards above the ancient brick floor, at the expense of the worthy vicar Dr. Jobson. The font is of ancient workmanship. Divine service is performed once on every Sunday, alternately morning and afternoon. The chancel is

* Cells were houses that belonged to great abbeys, or monasteries. Into these cells the monks of the abbeys sent colonies when they were too much crowded.

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divided from the nave by a handsome arch, the upper part of which is fitted up with a skreen, whereon is painted the decalogue, with a rude painting of Moses and Aaron standing on each side: the former is represented with the table of the ten commandments in his hand, as descending from the mount, and horns * issuing from his head. This is now only a chapel to Wisbech St. Peter's, though it is said to have been the mother church, and dedicated to St. Mary. † There are no mural monuments in the church. In the chancel are marble slabs to the memory of

Dr. Bull, a former vicar, who died in 1749, aged 66.
Rev. Edmund Brewster, in 1793.
Daniel Thorpe, in 1807.
Mary, his widow, in 1818, aged 80.

The altar is railed in, and has one step, and within is a tombstone to the memory of a younger branch of a family who were formerly very respectable inhabitants of this parish, viz. Daniel Hardy, who died at the age of 18, in the year 1757. On the south side of the communion table is a small arched recess, probably used heretofore for the holy water. Below the steps, in the middle of the chancel, lies an old stone, disrobed of an inscription. In the body of the church are the following marble slabs to

* Exodus chap. xxxiv. v. 29. "When Moses came down from the mount, he "wist not that the skin of his face shone," &c. The Latin vulgate renders the translation "horned," by confining the sense of the Hebrew word, which signified in general "rayed." From mistaking that translation, the Italian painters (whom others have ignorantly followed,) were accustomed to represent Moses with "horns," instead of "rays," of glorious light.

† Coles' MSS.

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John Gardiner, gent. who died in 1702.
Jeremiah Grounds, sen. in 1809, aged 56.
Susanna, his wife, in 1824, aged 70.
Alicia Grounds, wife of Jeremiah Grounds, jun. in 1817, aged 36.
Jeremiah Grounds, jun. her husband, in 1822, aged 32.

Also in the north aisle are slabs to John, Thomas, and Frances Cheeseman, the last of whom died in 1827.

In the church yard are various tombstones, to the memory of the families of Culy, Marriott, Skells, and Abbot; and on the south-east corner is a freestone altar tomb, with an inscription to the memory of Mr. John Hardy, who died in 1726.

Bishop Mawson issued certain articles of inquiry respecting the number and sorts of dissenters in 1755, when the churchwardens of Wisbech St. Mary's returned in answer, that there were ninety families in their parish, fifteen of which were called Culimites, a sect so little known, that Mr. Bentham, in his work, transcribed the following account of their founder.*

"The Culimites were so called from their founder, one "David Culy, who lived about the time of the revo- "lution, and was, as I've been informed, a native of "Guyhirn, (a hamlet of Wisbech St. Peter's) most of "the inhabitants of which place became his followers, "and many also from Whittlesea, Wisbech St. Mary's, "Outwell, and Upwell, until at length his flock, from very "small beginnings, was increased to 700 or 800. But

* See Stevenson's Appendix to Bentham's Ely.

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"since his death, which happened about 1718, it has been "continually on the decline, and is now so much reduced, "that, according to the account returned in by the "churchwardens, there are not above fifteen families of "this sect remaining in the diocese of Ely, who all dwell "at Wisbech St. Mary's and Guyhirn. David Culy "resided generally at Guyhirn, where he had a meeting "house, and was in such esteem among his followers, "as to be stiled 'the Bishop of Guyhirn.' As to his "doctrine, it differed very little, I believe, from that of "the Anabaptists, to which sect, I have been told, he "originally belonged. I once saw a book written by "David Culy, wherein his notions were particularly "described."

It is useful to record public gifts and benefactions, in order not only to preserve them, as far as can be, from devouring time, but to animate others, by example, to a worthy emulation of such charitable works, pleasing, it is to be hoped, to God and man. In this parish will be found the following

BENEFACTIONS.

JOHN BEND, of Wisbech Murrow, yeoman, by his will, gave certain lands to the use of the poor in *Wisbech Murrow, Guyhirn, Tholomas Drove, and Leverington Parson Drove;* and after declaring that he had made a feoffment to Thomas White and others, of a cottage and sixty-one acres of land in Wisbech Murrow, in Fenhall field, and three acres and a cottage in Chapel field, to the use of himself and Margaret, his wife, for their lives and the longest liver; after which, it was his will, that A.D. 1593.

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the feoffees should let the same yearly, or for not above ten years, and to demise the fifty-eight acres to the use of the poor of Wisbech aforesaid, to be employed towards making a stock to keep the poor on work; or else (if not against the laws of the realm) to distribute the yearly profit to such poor people inhabiting within *Murrow, Guyhirn, Tholomas, and St. Mary's* in Wisbech, as were there born, or there continuing for six years together, without relief; and for default of such not having need, the rents to be employed where most needful, in discharging any common charge, at the discretion of the feoffees: and the profits of the said cottage and three acres in Chapel field to be bestowed to such purposes before mentioned, and to such like poor inhabiting in Murrow only. The testator then declared that he had made a feoffment, and willed a cottage and sixteen acres in Leverington Parson Drove, to similar uses, for the poor of Parson Drove, and thereupon directed, that when four or five of the feoffees of Wisbech or of Parson Drove should die, the survivors should make over the estate to eight or ten other inhabitants, by deed, one of which to be in the custody of the ten men of the town of Wisbech, and their successors. And if his gift might not stand, according to the laws of the realm, or should be frustrated, then he willed his lands and tenements to the ten men of the town of Wisbech, and their succcssors, to be let with others of their lands, to be employed for the intents expressed in his will. This charity is distributed on St. Thomas' and new Candlemas-day in every year, according to the donor's will. The present surviving trustees are Messrs. Thomas Williamson, Abraham Culy, John Morris, and John Hollingworth.

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THOMAS HARDY, of Tholomas Drove, gent. by will, A.D. gave four acres of pasture in Richey field, in the same 1726. hamlet, also a lot of eight acres of marsh in Wisbech high fen, to certain trustees, upon trust; to keep six or more poor children of Wisbech St. Mary's at school with the schoolmaster, who was to be placed in the school house then lately built at his expence; and when the trustees were reduced to three, the survivors should grant over the said lands to the use of themselves and three new trustees. The said four acres never to be ploughed, nor the eight acres let to be burnt or cut up in turves. Other eight acres were also afterwards inclosed from the commons of Wisbech St. Mary's, and added to the above gift. In 1791 new trustees were appointed, who disposed of the rents of the three pieces of land in keeping certain poor children at school, and placing them with the schoolmaster in the school house built by the same Thomas Hardy. When the trustees were reduced to three, new ones were directed to be appointed. The present master, Mr. John Burman, was elected to the said school on the 24th of May 1819, at which time certain additional rules were drawn up by the trustees for the better regulation of the school. The present surviving trustees are Thomas Beakley the younger, Joseph Beakley, John Morris, John Hollingworth, Thomas Williamson, Christopher Thorpe, William Culy the younger, Samuel Marriott,* Henry Walker Marriott, and Joseph Gilby.

* There is a bridge at Guyhirn, called "Marriott's Brigge," leading to Tholomas Drove, mentioned by that name as early as 1438. Dugdale, p. 321.

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GUYHIRN, THOLOMAS DROVE, AND MURROW,

Are hamlets belonging to Wisbech St. Peter's, and adjoining to Wisbech St. Mary's, lying between five and six miles distant from St. Peter's, of which the dean and chapter of Ely have the manor. The turnpike road leading from Wisbech to Thorney passes through these hamlets, which consist of a few scattered houses along the road. At Guyhirn is a neat chapel for the performance of divine service, built in 1666, in the gift of the vicar of Wisbech, and the incumbency having been augmented by queen Ann's bounty, is now worth about £80. per annum, intended to be increased by the interest of £500. more, to be advanced as soon as a convenient purchase in land can be found. Dr. Jobson has lately expended a sum of money in repairing and beautifying the interior of this chapel, which altogether forms a very neat place of worship. The Rev. Thomas Patterson Holmes is the present incumbent.

It appears there was formerly a manor called Tudenham Hall, near Guyhirn, of which Sir Robert Tudenham was lord in 10th Edward I. (1281). The name of Sir Thomas Tudenham, who held certain estates at Tholomas Drove, occurs in 16th Henry VI. (1438) respecting his liability to repair a certain portion of bank there, beginning at the Fendyke.* On the accession of Edward IV. (1460) Sir Thomas Tudenham was beheaded with the earl of Oxford, for rebellion against that king, when probably his estates were confiscated, as we hear no more of this family.

* See page 33.

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In former times, the roads in these hamlets were for a great part of the year in an impassable state for travelling, no doubt, therefore, the inhabitants living at a distance from their parish church would find great convenience in having the benefit of religious services near their residence: accordingly, we find that a chapel within the cure of Wisbech, and named the chapel of Corpus Christi, was founded at Wisbech Murrow, by the ancestors of Richard Everard, esq.* and in 1388, the lord bishop of Ely licensed the inhabitants of Murrow hamlet to have a chaplain or priest there, to minister and celebrate divine service; and by the like reason of their distance from the parish church of Wisbech, the same privileges were extended to the inhabitants of Guyhirn hamlet, and it has been said, that certain lands remained in the hands of the chapelwardens towards the finding of a priest. In 1553, a pension of £3. 10*s.* per annum was paid to William Susan, "late "chantry priest of Gyherne." Capella Maria Magdalene de Guyherne, Capella in Murrow, and Capella apud Pigge's Drove, are all recorded to have once existed.† At the latter place, a license was granted in 1347, for a new oratory; besides which, there appears to have been another chapel at a place called Kilhus, or Kilhushing.‡ In 1406, the following chaplains are recorded as serving at the altars in the churches and chapels of Wisbech: Sir John Gray, (chaplain of Guyhirn) Sir John Lamysdale, Sir Thomas Wells, Sir Richard Austin, Sir Richard Lake, Sir Richard Blower, Sir William Thorpe, Sir William Marlys, Sir Thomas Austin, and Sir Thomas Waleys.§

* See page 167.

† Coles' MSS. The church of St. Mary in the fen end is supposed to refer to the Guyhirn chapel.

‡ See endowment of Wisbech vicarage, p. 245. § See note, p. 165.

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Mention is also made of a chapel in the hundred of Wisbech, called "Harrimere," or "Haveringmere," to which free chapel Sir Philip Tilney presented John Berewyke, on the death of Thomas Cotton, in 1390.* An ancient cross † formerly stood at Guyhirn, about the spot where the Murrow bank meets the turnpike road leading through Peakirk drove, and a tower of brick was there built by bishop Morton,‡ where the new cut met the river, in order, as it was said, that his lordship might see his workmen afar off in the level. Wisbech Guyhirn, Tholomas Drove, and Murrow partake of the benefit of the charity left by the before-mentioned will of John Bend.

It is said that Guyhirn was celebrated in ancient times for a severe engagement between a Saxon king and the abbot of Ely, which contest seems to have been of no ordinary description, as the legend informs us that 5000 men were brought into the field: it probably was in the time of the heptarchy, and arose from disputes respecting the boundary of property, frequent at such early periods. In this rencounter, the abbot is stated to have gained a complete and decisive victory over the prince.§

According to the population returns taken in 1821, Wisbech St. Mary's, with Guyhirn, Murrow, and Tholomas Drove, contained 1362 inhabitants, viz. 702 males, and 660 females.

* Coles' MSS. † See note, page 139. ‡ See note, page 40.

§ This anecdote is given from recollection, and corroborated by the the testimony of a learned friend. There is a record of such an event in some ancient document, but the compiler is at present unable to refer to it.

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LEVERINGTON

Is a large village, two miles north of Wisbech, lying in the hundred and deanery of Wisbech, divided into two townships, called Leverington St. Leonard's, and Leverington Parson Drove. In Blomefield's Collectanea there is mention made of a license for celebrating divine service in the chapel of Richmond manor, in Leverington, granted in 1390. In the fifteenth century is a presentment made by the jurors for the Wisbech hundred, that John de Chardeleigh, knight, held a manor in Leverington, called Richmonde, of the value of one hundred shillings above reprizes; and that John Everard, esq. held the manor in Leverington, called Fitton Hall, of the value of £6. per annum.* Of Richmond manor there is no further information until 1632, when it belonged to a family of the name of Carvill. The estate became afterwards in the possession of major Mason, of Necton, near Swaffham, in Norfolk, who sold it in lots, when the manor, with the principal farm, was purchased by Mr. George Johnson, to whom it now belongs.

The church is a noble and beautiful structure, having an antique square tower at the west end, finely proportioned and chastely ornamented, on which is placed a lofty spire of stone, of the height of 162 feet in the whole, admired as one of the most elegant in the isle and county. On each corner of the tower is a pretty considerable round turret, which has a very good effect. In the tower are five musical bells. The nave is spacious, as is the chancel, with two side aisles, and a chapel at the end of the south aisle, all of which are leaded. Here is also a beautiful

* Coles' MSS.

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south porch, built entirely of stone, with a priest's chamber over it, about twelve feet square, roofed also with freestone, and adorned with spire work. The church is exempt from the archdeacon's jurisdiction, and under that of the bishop only. A saint's bell used to hang at the east end of the church, by a small turret on the south side. The altar is on three steps, and is railed in.

In the south wall, by the altar steps, are three descending arches, where probably stood some stone stalls: near thereto is a niche for holy water.

Over the communion table are the decalogue, creed, and Lord's prayer. Within the rails are handsome marble slabs: the one on the south side of the communion table is to the memory of Jane, the wife of the Rev. Brock Rand, who died in 1747: "Quantum, heu "quantum desiderata;" and also to the said Brock Rand,* who was twenty-nine years rector of Leverington, and twenty-two of Newton, and died in 1753, aged 57. And that on the north side is to the Rev. James Nasmith, S. T. P.† who died in the year 1808, aged 68. At the foot of the altar steps is a large black marble slab, with a line drawn down the middle, and this inscription:

In Memory

Of Simon Hardy gent. who died 6th March, 1727.
Of Elizabeth his relict, who died in 1769, aged 74.

Of Matthew Hardy gent. who died in 1735.
Elizabeth, daughter of Simon Hardy.
Said Simon Hardy, who died in 1771.

* See 'Biography,' page 436. † Ibid. page 439.

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On a small freestone, on the north side of the chancel, is an inscription to the memory of Henry Pern, who died in 1721, having been forty years rector. Another slab to Robert Wells, M. D. who died in 1768; and another to the daughter of Ambrose Eyre, a former rector, who died in 1782. A large marble slab records the memory of John Johnson esq. high sheriff of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon in the year 1771. "He had seventeen children, eight of which lie buried "in the same grave. An honest man and a good "Christian." Died in 1785, aged 48.

Also two ancient slabs to John Simpson, who died in 1703, and John Denison, who died in 1716, and a recent one, adjoining to Simon and Matthew Hardy's, to the children of Nicholas Taylor.

Elegant arches of division separate the chancel from the south chapel, wherein are five escutcheons to the family of Swaine, and several mural monuments to them and the family of Cross, viz.

Robert Swaine, who died in 1705, aged 90. He was high sheriff of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon in 1681.

Thomas Swaine, who died in 1728, aged 84. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Roger Spelman, of Holme, in Norfolk, who died in 1719.

Another Robert Swaine, who died in 1721-22.

Mary, wife of John Swaine, daughter of John Tregonwell, esq. of Anderson, in the county of Dorset, who died in 1731.*

* See account of the family of Swaine, in Hutchen's History of Dorsetshire. *Coles' MSS.*

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Also of the said John Swaine, who died in 1752.

A slab to

Spelman Swaine, esq. who died in 1761, aged 65.

John Swaine, who died in 1772, aged 67.

Monuments to

Daniel Swaine, who married Mary, daughter of Simon Taylor of Lynn, and died in 1782, aged 59.

Spelman Swaine, who married Dorothy, daughter of Walter Robinson, of Lynn. The former died in 1803, aged 59; the latter, in 1808, aged 66. They had eleven children, six of whom survived them.

And a small tablet to Dorothy Swaine, daughter of Daniel and Mary Swaine, who died in 1824, aged 57.

Also to the family of Cross, as follows:

A mural monument, at the east end of this chapel, to Thomas Cross, who died in 1633, and another like monument, on the opposite side, to Thomas Cross, who died in 1743. On the floor are slabs to John Cross, who died in 1704; to Edward Cross, and Sarah, his wife, daughter of Dr. Massey, of Wisbech, who died in 1765; and to another Thomas Cross, who died in 1768; with a monumental slab to William Hawkins, of Wisbech, gent. who died in 1770.

In this chapel is a niche, formerly used for holy water, and therein also stands an eagle, but not of brass.

The nave is separated from the chancel by a handsome arch; five pillars on each side divide the aisles, and three pillars the south chapel from the chancel. In the south aisle is a slab to the memory of Mr. George Burgess, surgeon, late of Wisbech, who died in 1779, aged 49: "Superna curate non terrestria;" besides two or three slabs to the family of Denison.

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In the north aisle is a slab to the memory of a daughter of the Rev. Ambrose Goode,* curate, of the date of 1797.

Over the north door are several sentences of scripture: "This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter "into it," &c.

At the west end is a singing gallery, over which are the royal arms. At the bottom of the middle aisle, at the west end, stands the font: it is octagonal, in the Gothic style, richly ornamented with tracery, and niches round it, in which are sitting figures of bishops, &c.† enriched with pinnacles, crotchets, and roses. It is ascended on the west side by three stone steps, and a platform.

One of those ancient crosses,‡ formerly so general, used to stand at the extremity of the parish, (near the present residence of Mr. Abraham Ulyat) where the hamlet or township of Parson Drove commences, which went by the name of Peter's Cross, many years since removed.

The names of the following rectors have been preserved.

A.D.
1429 John Aylestone, who contributed largely towards building the chancel, as well as erecting the east window there.

* The present highly esteemed vicar of Terrington, Norfolk.

† Fonts were anciently adorned with the images of saints and holy men, to the end that such as were baptized might have before their eyes the representation of those persons eminent for holiness and virtue, whose actions they were to imitate. *Staveley's History of Churches.*

‡ See page 139.

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A.D.

1544 Sir Thomas Smith, secretary to Edward VI. was rector four years, from this date to 1549. He was also dean of Carlisle, and provost of Eton. When he was rector, the value of the rectory was estimated at £36. per annum only.*

1558 Richard Bowler occurs as rector, and was buried at Leverington 31st Januarie 1609.

1640 George Bayley, B.D. About 1646, he was sequestrated from the church, and lived twelve years under his sequestration, with a large family of children, in great hardships and wants, within two years of the restoration.†

1662 John Randolph, M.A. collated February 9th.

—— Richard Reynolds, presented August 10th.

1682 Henry Pern.

1721 John Rustat.

1724 Brock Rand.‡

1754 Samuel Fenner Warren, February 11th.

—— John Warren, (on the resignation of Samuel) May 28th; afterwards vicar of Wisbech, whence he was elevated to the see of St. David's, and afterwards translated to that of Bangor.

1770 Richard Oram.

1774 Ambrose Eyre.

1796 James Nasmith, D.D.§

1808 Bowyer Edward Sparke, D. D. This distinguished scholar, and accomplished gentleman, was seventh in the list of honours in the university of Cambridge in 1782, and second medallist, the late Richard Porson, with whom none could hope to enter into a successful competition, being the first. He has been successively dean of Bristol and bishop of Chester, and now fills the important see of Ely.

* Coles' MSS. † Ibid. ‡ See p. 436. § See p. 439.

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A.D.

1812 John Banks Jenkinson, D.D. since dean of Worcester, and now bishop of St. David's and dean of Durham.

1827 John Henry Sparke, M.A. eldest son of the lord bishop of Ely, and chancellor of the diocese.

In some of the church windows are considerable remains of painted glass. The east window of the north aisle, which is in the style of the fifteenth century, has been filled with painted glass, representing fifty small figures, at present mutilated in several places, and few of the panes are perfect, those which have been broken being replaced with plain glass. In the five larger lights are ten figures of Jewish kings, each attended by a saint or prophet, with a motto on a scroll; some of them very fine, particularly one holding out the hand, which is considered most excellently executed. This window was probably put up by the family which some of the above figures represented, who no doubt were lords of the manor: the several divisions between the figures are formed of vine branches; the smaller compartments are filled with figures of the Virgin Mary, symbols of the evangelists, &c.

In a north window of the chancel are four figures of two women and their husbands, in kneeling postures, heretofore considered very beautiful, but time has in part defaced them. They were in the dress of the times, very elegant; but the men in armour, in both pannels, are without any coat of arms on their armour. The first lady is in a blue mantle, on which is a lion rampant argent, with an inscription on a scroll over their heads. The verses are pretty plain: the picture is of our Lady, with our Saviour in her lap.

* Barm is an old English word for lap. *Chaucer.*

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" Lady, lede us well fro harm,
" To him y'at lay ded in ye barm."*

Under the figures, the word " Margaret," out of many other words now broken and lost, is the only one left, which, no doubt, was the Christian name of the lady above. On the mantle of the second lady is a lion rampant. In a scroll over their heads is this legend, still perfect, though the picture of St. John, which ought to be above it, is lost.

" Ju, fro sine make us fre,
" For John's love we baptised be."

In the chancel window was formerly inscribed: " Orate " pro anima Johis Aylestone, rector istius ecclesiæ, qui " hanc fenestram fieri fecit, et edificavit hunc cancellum. " 1429."*

The rectory is valuable, and was in the patronage of the bishop of Ely, until the Rev. Dr. Sparke, who held this living, was translated to that bishopric, when the living for the next turn became vested in the crown, who presented the same to the Rev. Dr. Jenkinson, dean of Worcester; and the dean having been recently preferred to the see of St. David's, and the deanery of Durham, the right of presentation has reverted to the lord bishop of Ely, who has in this present year (1827) collated the Rev. John Henry Sparke to the rectory. By the taxation of pope Nicholas in 1291, before mentioned,† Leverington is charged £85.

There are certain lands in the parish applied for the purposes of charity, and vested in feoffees, one of

* Coles' MSS. † See page 246.

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whom, who undertakes the management for the year, is called the town-bailiff, the annual value is at this time £290. 10*s*. Out of the rent of these lands, a salary of £30. per annum is given to a schoolmaster for educating poor children; Mr. Leahair is the present worthy master, and has sometimes fifty or sixty children under his care and instruction, but the average number may be fixed at forty. Other parts of these rents are applied towards the maintenance of the poor persons in the almshouses, and in keeping such buildings in repair; and the residue for general purposes relating to the benefit of the poor. There is an ancient building in the parish, not far from the church, which shews some marks of antiquity, called "the Guild Hall," in which probably the public business of the parish was formerly transacted. This is now converted into tenements used as almshouses, and occupied by parish paupers. There is a tradition of an hospital having once existed in this parish, dedicated to St. John the Baptist,* of which, however, no trace now remains, nor even is the site known.

A decoy for catching wild fowl used formerly to be kept in this parish. These decoys are generally formed by pools, surrounded by wood, and, branching off from them are small canals or ditches, called pipes. At the time of catching the fowls, these pipes are covered over with nets, which rest on hoops, and are terminated by a drawing net; into these the wild fowl are enticed by various devices, but the usual mode is by means of a decoy-duck, trained for the purpose: this bird is taught to obey the whistle of the decoy-man, who tempts it to swim up the trapping tunnel, when he sees

* There was an old hospital, long since decayed, and the endowment swallowed up, as may be collected from bishop Tanner's Notitia Monastica, p. 54. *Coles' MSS.*

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a number of wild birds; these, following the tame one, and being led into the channel, are then inclosed and taken by the net. In all cases, however, the tame duck does not succeed in trepanning the others, when the man employs a small dog, which, by swimming about among the rushes and reeds, close to the mouth of the net, attracts the wild fowl. The general season for catching these is from the end of October until February.

The manor of Fitton before mentioned * is supposed to have been anciently held by a family of that name, though there is no record of it. Afterwards, it passed successively to the Hodes, Lawrences, Everards, and Buckworths, the latter of whom were possessed of it in 1632. An old-fashioned brick building still retains the name of Fitton Hall, but it appears to be no longer known as a manor.

A.D. 1330. A chantry heretofore founded was endowed with revenues for priests to sing mass for the souls of the donors, in the reign of Edward III. In 1374, Sir John de Holbeck,† Sir Nicholas Lowe, Sir Thomas Howe, and Sir William Edward, were chaplains of Leverington 1459. chantry chapel. In 38th Henry VI. the license for celebrating divine service was transferred,‡ by permission of bishop Gray, to the chapel of

PARSON DROVE.

This church or chapel, now dedicated to St. John the Baptist, is a large structure, with a nave and side aisles, and a tower, with five bells therein. The interior of

* See page 463. † See page 165.

‡ Fitton Hall chantry lands were transferred to Parson Drove. *Lyson's Cambridgeshire.*

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the church was fresh painted and ornamented in 1825, under the direction of Mr. Ulyat, the churchwarden, when a new window was placed in the east end, representing the crucifixion, painted on glass by Mr. Peck,* and presented by him to the church. The parsonage house was rebuilt by the Rev. Mr. Dickinson, the late incumbent, about the year 1760.

The village or township, which goes by the name of Leverington Parson Drove, is pleasantly situated about seven miles west of Wisbech, and the soil surrounding it is most fertile.

The estate belonging to this chapel consists of a messuage, and one hundred and forty-one acres of land, in Leverington Parson Drove, Leverington St. Leonard's, and Wisbech, which were vested, after the reformation, in feoffees, for the maintenance of the chaplain, together with eleven acres and three roods of land, since allotted in respect of the said messuage. Some mismanagement or misconversion took place in regard to the application of the rents of this estate, as appears by the following decree.

On 30th November, 11th William III. (1698) an inquisition being held at Wisbech, by virtue of his majesty's commission from the court of Chancery, directed to the lord bishop of Ely, Josiah Colvile, John

* Mr. Peck, a resident of this village, is one of those useful characters of sound understanding, who, by his ability and general knowledge in the transaction of all parochial business, renders himself eminently useful, not only to the inhabitants of the village where he resides, but to his surrounding neighbours. The compiler is indebted to this gentleman for information respecting this township and some of the adjoining villages.

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Bellamy, esq. and others, for inquiring and reformation of deceits and breaches of trust, concerning lands, tenements, and other things given to charitable uses, agreeable to the act of 43d Elizabeth: it was then found that a messuage, and divers parcels of land and pasture, in Leverington Parson Drove, Leverington St. Leonard's, and Wisbech, in the said isle, containing, by estimation, one hundred and forty-one acres, with the appurtenances, were theretofore in very ancient times, by some pious and charitable donor or donors, given and settled upon divers inhabitants of Parson Drove, upon godly and pious uses, but who was or were the donor or donors, or to what use or uses the same were at first given, the jurors could not particularly discover; but that the rents and profits had been received by the chapelwardens of Parson Drove, for maintaining a curate or chaplain for performing divine rites and services in the chapel of Parson Drove, and for repairing and upholding the said chapel; and the jurors were induced to believe so, because the mother church of Leverington was at a great distance from Parson Drove, *and the way and passage to and from the same troublesome and dangerous in the time of winter.* Another parcel of land, containing eleven acres and three roods, had also been then lately allotted to the said messuage, by virtue of an act for draining the fens. By this inquisition it appeared that the chapelwarden for the year 1690 had received the rents of the premises, which then amounted to £64. 10*s.* 2*d.** per annum, but refused to make out the account of employment of the full rents and profits for the purposes of the charity, and did account only for £20. per annum to the minister, and other disbursements for the repairing of the chapel, quit rents, and other rates and assessments; so that the

* The present rental is upwards of £300. per annum.

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jurors believed the chapelwarden had misemployed and misconverted much of the monies. The commissioners, therefore, on considering the matters, did adjudge and declare, that it was the purpose and intent of the donor or donors of the said premises, that the same should be *let yearly at the best advantage and profit* that could be made, and that the rents should yearly for ever be applied in providing and maintaining *an able and fit curate or chaplain*, to celebrate and perform divine rites and services in the said chapel of Parson Drove, and in the necessary *repairs of the fabrick* of the said chapel, and in the relief of *some indigent, needy, and aged poor* of the said parish. And it was further decreed, that the trustees should every year, with the consent of the chaplain, let the said one hundred and forty-one acres, and eleven acres and three roods of land, for the best and utmost rent and advantage, and receive the rents, and employ the same, *with the consent of the chaplain*, to the uses thereafter expressed, viz. so much as should be needful should be employed in and about the repairs and upholding the said fabric of the said chapel, and also so much more, not exceeding in one year forty shillings, for relief of four poor aged persons, and the remainder of the said rents, after deduction made of disbursements for *quit rents, rates, taxes, assessments, charges of repairs, and other necessary allowances, should be yearly paid over to the chaplain.* And the trustees should yearly make up their accounts of all receipts and disbursements, unto seven persons, thereby appointed supervisors and auditors, or three at least of them; and if any difference arose, touching the repairing or upholding the chapel, the same should be settled by the supervisors or any three. Power is also given to appoint ten of the inhabitants of the hamlet to act as trustees, subject to

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the above rules concerning the charity, and when five of the trustees should be dead, the survivors, at the request of the curate or chaplain, or two or more inhabitants, should appoint other five. The chaplain is to be nominated by the supervisors and auditors, or three at least of them, and by the trustees for the time being, or the greater number, with three supervisors at least, and approved of by the lord bishop of Ely. Provision is made for continuing a succession of supervisors and auditors, and likewise for ten trustees. The supervisors and auditors appointed in 1811 were

Sir James Duberley, knight, of Gains Hall, Hunts.
Richard Reynolds, esq. of Paxton, ditto.
Lawrence Reynolds, esq. of Buckden, ditto.
James Duberley, esq. eldest son of Sir James.
Rev. Edward Maltby, D.D. vicar of Holbeach.
Daniel Barley, gent. of March.
Edmund Burton, gent. of Doddington.

The present trustees of the enfeoffed estates are

Mr. Abraham Ulyat, senior.
Abraham Ulyat, junior.
Abraham Ulyat, son of the late Mr. John Ulyat.
John Johnson.
James Edgson, junior.
Richard Gunn.

A portion of this hamlet still retains the name of Trokenholt,* where anciently stood a hermitage or chapel. We find it mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle,

* See page 32.

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A. D. 664,* when the famous abbey of Medehamstead, or Peterborough, was first founded by the king of the Mercians, and was given to the monks of Thorney, in the reign of Henry II.†

Mr. Abraham Ulyat now resides on the site of this ancient cell or hermitage, of which there are no remains whatever at the present day; but when the present house was built in 1802, a few fragments of stone were discovered, and several human bones dug out of the foundation. At a sessions of sewers held at Wisebeche in the 16th Henry VI. (1438) the abbot of Thorney is ordered to scour out the sewer of Trokenholt, unto Clow's Cross, in Leverington,‡ in respect of his lands in Trokenholt.

It has been before stated, that John Bend, by his will, in 1593,§ gave a certain cottage and sixteen acres of land to the poor of Parson Drove: the land lies in

* See page 113.

† Dugdale, p. 367. In 1169, Nigellus, the bishop, gave to the monastery of Thorney the hermitage of Trokenholt, formerly called Endewicke, in the county of Cambridge, with one square mile of fen, and confirmed it to the abbot and convent of Thorney, to place there those who might serve God under their control and jurisdiction. This charter king Edward III. afterwards confirmed in the 22d year of his reign. This place, until the above donation, belonged to the church of Ely, it being expressed in a very ancient letter, that this church enjoyed it for 191 years. Afterwards, on account of the irruption of the barbarians, it lay for 111 years as it were destroyed by their desolation. Afterwards, for 139 years, the abbot of the rule of St. Benedict enjoyed it; of whom, Edwin gave permission to one of his monks of the name of Trokenholus, to live as a hermit in the place called Endewicke; so the place laid aside its ancient name, and from that time forth was called Trokenholt, which has been continued to the present time.

‡ Dugdale, p. 117. A stone cross was formerly set up here, at the Old or South Eau, the division of the counties of Lincoln and Cambridge.

§ See page 457.

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South Inham field, and by the inclosure of Parson Drove fen, an allotment of seven acres has been added thereto, with two acres in Leverington marsh, making together twenty-five acres. The cottage devised by such will is now become a messuage, used as a public-house, called the Butchers' Arms, which, with the land, is let for £ 100. per annum. This sum is, on new year's day in every year, given to such poor belonging to the parish or township, as have resided therein without receiving any parochial relief for the space of six years last past, according to the donor's will.

The inhabitants inclosed a piece of land a few years since from the waste, the rent whereof is applied in the support of a master to teach the poor children of the township to read and write. Mr. Weight is the present master. The township maintains its own poor, and has a separate overseer and constable, distinct from the parish of Leverington.

The following incumbents appear on record.

A.D.

1686 Rev. Peter Pindar, who resigned on his acceptance of the curacy of Wisbech St. Peter's. He married the widow of the Rev. Mr. Herring, rector of Walsoken, and father of the archbishop.

1692 Rev. Henry Pujolas was curate for sixty years, as appears by his tomb-stone in the chapel yard, and was buried 3d October 1749, aged 98.

1749 Rev. John Dickinson, who died in 1790, at the age of 83, rebuilt the parsonage house about the year 1760, and was succeeded in

1790 By Rev. Richard Pollard, the present incumbent or chaplain, who was appointed by the honourable James Yorke, then bishop of Ely, as to a lapsed benefice.

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J.H.West Del.ᵗ

Melville Sc.ᵗ

NEWTON HALL,

The ancient Seat of the Family of Colvile, who resided there for 500 Years ... Pulled down in 1793.

This Plate is Inscribed to Sir C.H Colvile of Duffield Hall Derbyshire with assurances of high Respect.

By his obliged and obedient humble Servant Wᵐ Watson

The number of inhabitants, according to the population returns in 1821, was as follows:

	Males.	Females.	Total.
In Leverington	414	434	848
In Parson Drove	362	313	675

NEWTON

Is a small village in the hundred, and four miles north of the town, of Wisbech, on the left of the road leading from thence to Long Sutton. The church, which is dedicated to the honour of St. James, is a decent structure, with a nave and side aisles, a spacious chancel, and the floor neatly paved. The tower has six bells.* The north aisle is said to have been erected by the ancient family of Colvile, and the southern was afterwards erected at the expense of Jeffrey Wantling, who espoused the cause of the parliament in the time of Oliver Cromwell: the east end of the north aisle is railed off, and incloses a burial place of the Colvile family, about eighteen feet in depth; but, notwithstanding the many years that the family lived here, there is not a monument in the church to them; and even this part where they bury is in a manner unpaved. Two ancient brass helmets, which appear to have been formerly much decorated, still remain there, with two escutcheons,† which seems as if there had been heretofore some care taken about the

* The bells were taken down and re-cast in 1786. The weight of the old bells was 37 cwt. 18 lbs.; of the new, 38 cwt. 3 qrs. 2 lbs. the total cost whereof was £98. 6s. 9d.

† The honour of the dead grew by the solemnity and state of the funeral, and by the erecting monuments to the memory of him that was buried, as what armours, swords, helmets, and such like ensigns of honour, appertained to him. *Hearne's Discourses*, vol. i.

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burial place of the family. In 1527 one William Thornborough gave twenty shillings to buy a canopy for the high altar.* Five arches support the roof of the building, which has been heretofore highly ornamented, the remains of gilding being still to be seen. Over the arches are several sentences from scripture, painted by John Lumpkin, gent. in 1719, who died in the year 1761, at the age of 90, and lies buried in the north aisle, having been churchwarden fifty-two years. The pulpit and reading desk are neat. The windows have been heretofore decorated with painted glass; remnants were preserved until very lately, particularly on the south-east side, in which were two figures, and a scroll from their mouths: "Orate pro animabus—Colvile." A large arch at the east end divides the chancel from the nave, with a screen, which, if entirely taken away, would add considerably to the general good effect of the interior, or even its removal to the west end would be an improvement. The altar stands on three steps, railed in. Several stones lie in the chancel without any inscription, but it is probable they have been disrobed. In the middle aisle are several very ancient monumental stones, now defaced, some of which appear to have been originally ornamented with brass; there is one dedicated to Anne, daughter of Richard Stone, knight, and wife of Richard Colvile, esq. lying opposite to the reading desk, with the following inscription:

"Cætera magnificis ditescant templa sepulchris,
"Nostra satis ditas ossibus, Anna, tuis."

In the chancel is a neat mural monument to the memory of Samuel Taylor, gent. who died 26th March 1806, aged 50.

* Coles' MSS.

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The communion plate belonging to the church is very handsome, the gift of which is commemorated by the following entry in the parish register: "Memorandum, "That in the year 1674, Sir John Co'ell and Mr. John "Larry, executors of the Rt. Rev. Father in God, "Benjamin, lord bishop of Ely, did give to the parish "church of Newton, within the isle of Ely, the com- "munion plate of the said bishop, namely, one gilt "flagon, one gilt chalice and cover, and one gilt patin, "for the use of the said parish in the holy communion. "All which plate are now delivered in the custody of "the churchwardens of the said parish on 20th April "1675.

"Hen. Drew,
"Thos. Blaxby, } *Churchwardens.*"

The flagon is large and handsome, holding in measure three quarts, and stands about eight inches high.

The bishop of Ely is patron of the living: the present incumbent is the Rev. Dr. Peter Sandiford,* a man of considerable talent and learning. By pope Nicholas' taxation in 1291,† the living was charged at £40. and is valued in the king's books at £18. 14*s.* 8½*d.* The following rectors appear on record since 1600.

A.D.
1619 William Lawrence.
1625 John Cropley, D.D. prebendary of Ely.

* This respectable divine was of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge. B.A. 1771; M.A. 1774; was chosen fellow in 1778, and was presented by that society to the livings of Fulmodestone and Thurning, in Norfolk. In 1795, he was elected professor of astronomy in Gresham college; was chaplain to archbishop Moore at the time of his death, and in 1810, was collated by his cotemporary, bishop Dampier, to the valuable rectory of Newton, on which he vacated the living of Thurning. *Nicholls' Literary Anecdotes*, vol. viii. p. 209.

† See page 246.

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A.D.
1638 Robert Bedingfield, D.D.
1653 John Padson.
1654 Thomas Sea, who was succeeded by Keene.
—— John Crofts, S.T.P. dean of Norwich.
1675 Nicholas Felton.
1677 Richard Oldman, A.M. fellow of St. John's college, Cambridge.
1678 Samuel Blyth, A.M. master of Clare-hall, Cambridge.
1714 Robert ———— S.T.P. archdeacon of Norwich.
1716 Thomas Cole, S.T.P. fellow of King's college, Cambridge, dean of Norwich, and rector of Rainham, Norfolk.
1730 Brock Rand, A.M. also rector of Leverington.
1753 William Graves, also rector of Leverington.
1783 Joseph Plumtree.
1810 Peter Sandiford, D.D. also rector of Fulmodestone with Croxton, in the county of Norfolk.

The manor of Newton continued in the Colvile family from nearly the time of the conquest until the year 1792, when it was sold by Robert Colvile, esq. and now belongs to Steed Girdlestone, esq. of Wisbech.

The family of Colvile is one of the most distinguished and ancient in this part of the country, of which Sir Charles Colvile, of Duffield Hall, in Derbyshire, is now the surviving representative. The original ancestor, Gilbert de Colvile, or Colvyle, (Gilbertus de Colavilla) came from Normandy, as a commander in the army of William the Conqueror.* Lands were given to him in

* See copy of the roll of Battel Abbey, which contains a catalogue of the noblemen, lords, and gentlemen, who came into the land with William the Conqueror, wherein will be found the name of Colvile, a more full account whereof is given in the description of Hagbech Hall, and the family of Sir Henry Peyton, baronet.

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Suffolk, which he held under the baron Robert Malet, viz. lands in Carleton, Stokerland, Kessingland, Renlesham, Riscemere, Merelesham, and Isleham, in Cambridgeshire.* The name was derived from a castle on a hill: Col-vile. *Vile*, in ancient French, was *castle:* towns were the dependants of castles. A town in Normandy is still called Colvile. Robert de Colvile occurs in the time of Henry I., who had a son, Gilbert de Colvile, living in the time of Stephen and Henry II.; his brother Philip went into Scotland; he took for his arms, a cross muline gules on a field argent, as is now born by his descendant, *lord Colvill*, of Culross, adding the second final '*l*,' according to the modern way of spelling 'ville;' in his time, the Colviles, who became barons Colvile, of Castle Bitham, Lincolnshire, separated from this family. Sir Henry de Colvile was for six years sheriff of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, commencing 21st Henry III. (1236); his son, Sir Roger, was sheriff for Norfolk and Suffolk,† 51st Henry III.; he married Galiena Walpole, *the king having honoured this marriage by his presence;* he was lord of the manor of Carleton Colvile, &c. with many privileges and liberties, which his ancestors possessed from the conquest. Sir Roger de Colvile, about 1240, married Desiderata, daughter and heiress of Jeffrey de Marisco, or Marsh, who was lord of Newton, Walsoken, Tid St. Giles, &c. a great part of which lands were held by the Colvile family from that period until the alienation in 1792. In the early

* See Domesday Book.

† Only one sheriff was appointed for the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, until 18th Elizabeth, (1576) when the usage was for the crown to appoint one year out of the gentlemen of Norfolk, and the next out of Suffolk, and so alternately, as is now the custom in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

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part of the reign of Edward I. Sir Roger received the arms now worn by the family.* Sir John de Colvile accompanied Edward III. with his victorious army to France, and there died in battle. His eldest son married Alice, sister and heiress of Sir John de Insula, or de Lisle, of Kent, who was heir of Sir William de Rustyn; by this marriage he obtained the manors of Wymondham, Cungham, Sudleschund, and Audmere; he left a son, Sir John, who married Emma, daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Wythe, of Norfolk, by Sybill, his wife, daughter and heiress of Edmund de St. Omer.† In the year 1410, he was appointed by the lord bishop of Ely to succeed Sir John de Rochford as governor of Wisbech castle.‡ He likewise built the chapel of St. Mary at Newton, and founded the college hereafter mentioned. A Sir John Colvile of the date of 1405 joined the rebellion of the earl of Northumberland and the northern chiefs, and was beheaded.§ This gentleman was most probably of the *Scotch branch*, as Sir John, of whom we are now speaking, received a pension from the kings of England, viz. Henry IV., V., and VI. A bull from pope Boniface, dated in 1404, to Sir John, still remains in possession of the family. There used to be a representation of this knight in one of the south windows of Newton church, with his wife near him. Sir Thomas Colvile was sheriff of Cambridgeshire 7th Charles I.: he had a brother Richard, who left eight sons and two daughters; he died in 1650, and was succeeded by William Colvile,

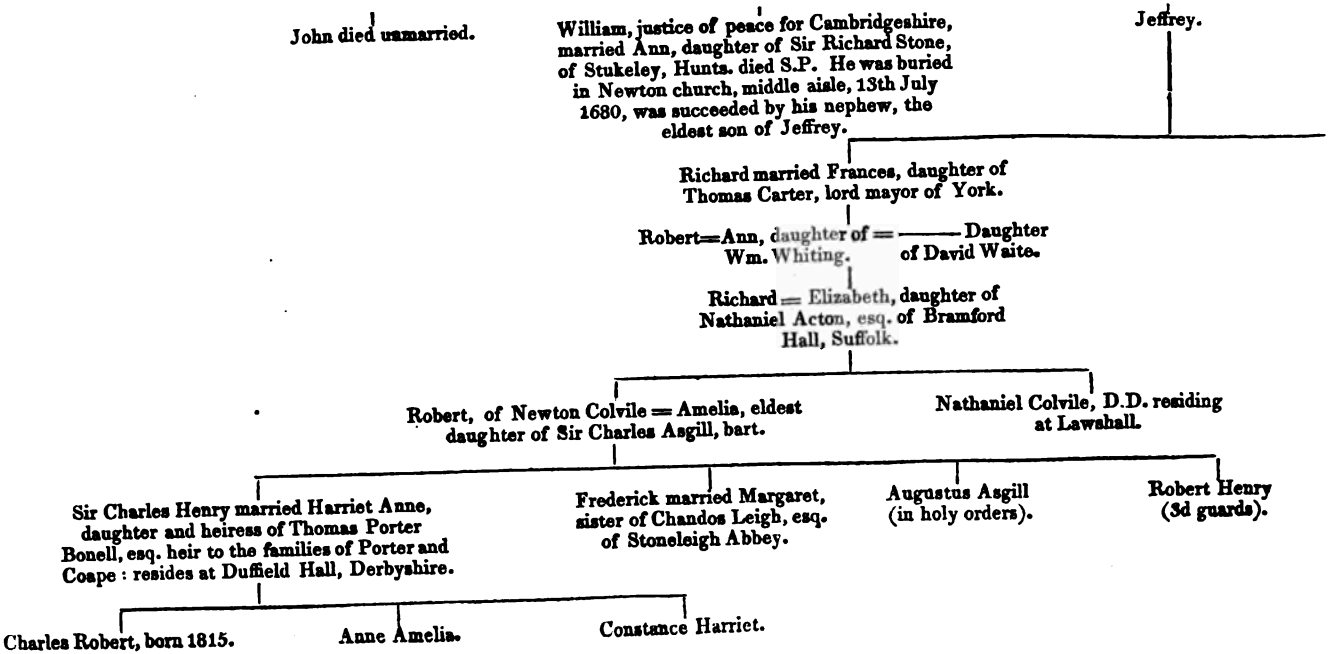
* See the description of these arms at the conclusion of this account of the family.

† See roll of Battel Abbey. ‡ See page 130.

§ See Shakspeare's 2d Part King Henry IV.; act iv. scene 7.: "Send "Colvile, then, with his confederates, to York, to present execution," &c. Also Hardinge Chronicles.

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who married Ann, daughter of Sir Richard Stone, of Stukeley, Hunts., and took an active part in support of Charles I. It was the custom in those divided times for the partizans of king Charles to carry certain tokens about with them, and if all the company produced one, conversation became free. These tokens consisted of a profile of Charles, engraved in the manner of a seal, fixed upon a small handle, to be worn in the pocket, the seal bearing an impression of two angels uniting the hearts of Charles and his subjects, one of which in silver, being preserved, is now in the possession of the present Sir Charles Henry Colvile. The above William having died without issue, and his next brother Jeffrey being also dead, was succeeded by the eldest son of the latter, viz. his nephew Richard, who married Frances, the daughter of Thomas Carter, esq. lord mayor of York. His grandson Richard married Elizabeth, only daughter of Nathaniel Acton, esq. of Bramford Hall, Suffolk, with whom he received Hemingstone Hall, in Suffolk, where he resided during the life of his father. The last named Richard had two sons; Robert married Amelia, eldest daughter of Sir Charles Asgill, bart. and Nathaniel Colvile, D. D. residing at Lawshall, Suffolk; which Robert left four sons, the eldest of whom, Sir Charles Henry, now resides at Duffield Hall, in Derbyshire, having married Harriet Anne, daughter and heiress of Thomas Porter Bonell, esq. heir to the families of Porter and Coape, by whom he has one son, born 30th March 1815, and two daughters, Anne Amelia, and Constance Harriet, and, as a singular coincidence, the son was born on the very same day of the month, same day of the week, and almost at the same hour, as his mother. Subjoined is a pedigree, which will better elucidate the descent of this ancient family.

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In the reign of Henry IV. Sir John Colvile founded a college in the parish of Newton, and had a patent to endow it with £40. per annum; the ancient endowment was as follows: "Collegium perpetuum quatuor Capellanorum quatuor Clericorum, et decem "pauperum, et quorum quidem, Capellanorum unus "esset magister sive custos." It was called the college of St. Mary by the sea coast, for four chaplains, four clerks, and ten poor men.* The first statutes given by the founder are dated 18th June 1411, in which they are to pray for him and Emma, his wife. These statutes he reformed himself 4th June 1446, a little before his death. There are no remains of this college, but the site is well authenticated to be a little west of, and adjoining to, the glebe land of the rectory house, at a short distance from the old Roman bank. After the reformation, the lands belonging to this college or chapel were annexed to the rectory.† The Colvile family kept up a residence at Newton Hall from the period when Sir Roger de Colvile married Desiderata, in the time of Henry III., for a succession of above 500 years, until Robert Colvile, esq. in 1792, sold this ancient property to Mr. Redin. The old hall has been taken down, and a substantial farm house erected on the site, by Mr. Redin in 1807, which, with a considerable portion of

* One of the chaplains, who served the parish church, had £5. 6s. 8d. per annum; the other one hundred shillings; the clerks forty shillings and fourpence, and the poor men, who lived in a house called the Bede House, sixpence per week each and clothes.

† The lands belonging to Newton rectory lie in the parishes of Newton, Parson Drove, Wisbech St. Peter's and St. Mary's, Elm, Walsoken, West Walton, Emneth, and Tid St. Giles, containing together 398 acres; this is transcribed from the town terrier, in the hand writing of Mr. John Lumpkin, dated 1712, who, from various parish documents, appears to have been a very praise-worthy and useful man. See page 480.

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the old estate, was sold to Mr. John Edward Todd, of London, in 1823. The crest, which used to be over the gateway of the old hall, now constitutes the sign of the public house in the parish; it is a lion passant in carved wood, and the house by some is called the White Lion, and by others the Colvile Arms. Certain Roman coins of the emperor Gallienus were found in the parish about forty years since. There are no public benefactions in the parish; but an annual sum of money is paid to a schoolmistress, for teaching the poor boys and girls of the village in useful reading and work, of which the parish pays £7. 18*s.* and the rector £2. 2*s.* making together £10. The school is held in the vestry of the church.

The arms of Colvile, as born since the time of Edward I. are as under:

A lion rampant argent on a shield azure, a label with five points gules, the whole width of the shield. Crest, a lion statant argent, with an extended tail, wearing a collar of three points gules on a chapeall gules.*

The population of Newton in 1801 was 283; in 1811, 311; and in 1821, 368, viz. 179 males, and 189 females; comprised in 76 families, inhabiting 61 houses.

TID SAINT GILES,

A village adjoining to Newton, and lying not only at the most northern part of the isle of Ely, but of the whole county of Cambridge; so called, because the tide at some period came in hither. It borders in part

* See page 484.

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upon the shire drain, which divides the county of Cambridge from Lincolnshire. The church, dedicated to St. Giles, is a rectory in the deanery and hundred of Wisbech, and stands rated in the king's books at £21. 13s. It is a good neat structure, with a square embattled tower, containing a ring of five bells, and stands about fifty feet from the body of the church at the east end, which is very unusual. The pillars of the nave incline to the west, which induce some persons to suppose that a tower did once support that end of the church. The altar stands on an eminence of two steps, but not railed in. The chancel is of modern erection, built about seventy years since, when particular attention was given to discover whether the present tower was ever connected with the church, but the foundation showed no marks that any former building ever existed to unite the tower therewith. The roof has several projecting figures of angels and saints, rudely carved in wood. At the foot of the altar steps, exactly in the middle, was an old grey marble with the half figure of a priest in brass on it, but no inscription. The nave is separated from the chancel by a screen. In the middle aisle of the church is a gravestone with a large cross on it, and the following fragment of an inscription in old Gothic characters all round it, which appears to belong to the thirteenth century, though it bears no certain evidence of exact date; such part of it as is perfect is "Orate pro anima dni John Fysner ——— "aie de ppiciet. Amen." In the windows of the north aisle used to be some old painted glass, and in the same aisle are two ancient slabs, appearing to have once had figures in brass. In front of the communion table is a handsome marble slab to the memory of the Rev. Richard Oswin, who died in 1795, aged 75. At the west end, on the north side, is a recent monumental marble to the

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Rev. Timothy Matthews, rector of the parish, who died in August 1821, aged 52, and of his wife, who died in November following, aged 50. The lord bishop of Ely is patron of this living, which, by pope Nicholas' taxation,* was charged at £ 42. The font is entitled to notice, being of the later Gothic style, octagonal, and richly ornamented with tracery, carved with emblems of the passion, and arms of the see of Ely. Nicholas Breakspear is said to have been curate here, who, for planting Christianity in Norway, was made a cardinal A. D. 1154, and afterwards became pope, under the name of Adrian IV. There is a tradition that a market was once held in an open space in the front of the public house called the Carpenters' Arms, but the authority seems doubtful. The manor in the fourteenth century was in the ancient family of Colvile, before-named in the account of Newton,† and afterwards, in the year 1637, came by purchase into the Trafford family, which originally came from Lancashire. This manor was sold in the time of the great rebellion in 1648, to one Davies, for £472. 11*s.*; but afterwards reverted to the family of Trafford. In the manor house belonging to the late Mr. Trafford, occupied by Mr. Scribo, at the north-east of the church, on the other side of the road, were several arms beautifully painted in a chamber window.‡ Sigismund Trafford, esq. who made considerable purchases in this parish, came last from Asterby, near Horncastle, in the county of Lincoln: he married, first, Elizabeth, the daughter of Gilbert Heathcote, esq. lord mayor of London;§ secondly, lady Pratt, the widow of Sir Roger Pratt, of Riston Hall, Norfolk: she died

* See page 246. † See page 483. ‡ Coles' MSS.
§ Nicholls' History of the Gentleman's Society at Spalding, p. 38.

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in the 63d year of her age, and a monument was erected to her memory in Riston church by Sigismund Trafford. He rebuilt Dunton Hall,* on the north side of Shire Drain, at the expense of £22,000. on the model of Buckingham House, in St. James' Park,† before it was altered and enlarged by his present majesty. This mansion was left to Sigismund Boehm, the son of his niece Ann Boehm, who died in the year 1740, at the early age of 48, whereupon, Clement, the second son of the last-named Sigismund, who took the name of Trafford agreeably to his great uncle's will, and was admitted of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge, about 1755, inherited the estates, and after being some years in possession, pulled down the mansion house in the year 1767, and sold the materials for £1000. but removed the family pictures and painted glass to his seat at Stoke, in Norfolk. Events of this kind lead the mind into reflections on the vicissitude and instability of human grandeur! Mr. Clement Trafford married Miss Southwell, sister of Edward Southwell, esq. of Wisbech castle, about the year 1760, and in the following year was knighted: he died in 1786, leaving one daughter, Jane, and one son, Sigismund Trafford, esq. who, after his mother's decease, added the surname of of Southwell, conformably to her will, and now resides at Wroxham Hall, in the county of Norfolk.‡ At the death of lady Trafford, relict of Sir Clement, in the year 1807, the principal estate was divided and sold in separate farms. The family of Trafford is very ancient, and the

* "Dunton Hall," says Stukeley, "in the parish of Tidd, had been "magnificently rebuilt by Sigismund Trafford, esq. who has likewise en- "closed a considerable park with a brick wall." The park was about a mile and a half in circumference, stocked with deer, &c.

† See engraving.

‡ This gentleman died at his seat at Wroxham Hall, Norfolk, on 1st August 1827.

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Melville sc.

DUNTON HALL,

The Seat of the late Sir Clement Trafford — Taken down in 1767.

Published by B. & J. Lack, Wisbech, 1807.

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origin of the motto on their arms is peculiar and curious.* The arms are a labouring man in a party-coloured coat, with a flail in his hand, thrashing, and this written motto: "Now thus," which is said to have been obtained on the following occasion: the ancestor having intelligence that William the Conqueror had given his lands unto one of his Norman knights, and understanding on what day this knight would come to take possession thereof, he apparelled himself very meanly, and was found by the knight thrashing in his barn, and when demanded why he so abased himself, he gave no other answer than "Now thus;" whereupon, the knight, thinking the living so poor that it would not maintain him like a gentleman, compromised with Trafford for a small matter, and begged a better estate from the king. "Now thus" is still the motto of the family. About the time of the great undertaking for draining the level, some attempts were made for reclaiming the fens belonging to this and the adjoining parishes. In 1632, an agreement was made by the land-owners with Henry Dereham, of London, esq. for draining and keeping the water one foot below the soil, and for his charges therein, he was to receive two fifth parts of the grounds so drained, to be secured to him and his heirs for ever: the said agreement was fully ratified by a decree made at Wisbech upon the 20th September in the same year, at a session of sewers there held; but nothing effectual appears to have been done until 1773, when an act of parliament was obtained for draining Tid. St Giles and

* Such mottos were not used in England before the conquest, and one of the most ancient is said to be Traford's, or Trafford's, in Lancashire. *Hearne's Ancient Curiosities.*

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Newton, in the county of Cambridge, with part of Tid St. Mary's, in the county of Lincoln; by the powers and provisions of which act, additional engines were erected, and a large tract of land brought under cultivation.

Robert Brigstock, of this place, husbandman, by a deed dated April 13th 1667, gave, for the benefit and advantage of the poor inhabitants, the rents and profits arising from several pieces of land, amounting together to thirteen acres and three roods. And Matthew Wren, esq. by his will made "The 19th day of May "1672, on board the Royal Prince, in sight of the "Dutch fleet,* in expectation of fighting with them in "a few hours," gave for the use of the poor, fifteen acres of marsh land, held under lease of twenty-one years from his late father, Matthew, lord bishop of Ely, annually paying the reserved rent of one shilling and fourpence farthing per acre, which sum is still continued to be paid. These united charities were let by public auction for the term of seven years from Lady-day 1824, producing an annual rent of £74. 14s., which is given away in the parish vestry, according to ancient usage, at or near unto the feasts of Easter and St. Thomas the Apostle in every year, to such poor and deserving people, as have lived without parochial relief since the distribution of the previous dole.

* This was the period when the Dutch fleet, under the command of De Ruyter, fell in with the English in Solebay, the duke of York high admiral. The earl of Sandwich lost his life in this engagement, but left behind him a name immortal, and which will ever be revered by such as esteem the valour of an officer, the capacity of a statesman, or the integrity of a patriot. *Campbell's Admirals*, vol. ii. p. 391.

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The present trustees of these charities are

John Peck, of Parson Drove.
Thomas Watkinson, of Tid St. Giles.
Edward Cross, of Wisbech.
Joseph Bonn Griffin, of the same place.

In the register of this parish is the following entry amongst the marriages: "1713. Thomas Wiles, aged "105, was married to Susanna Johnson, both of this "parish, July 1st."

The population returns in 1821 give the following number of inhabitants: males 393, females 388, total, 781.

	Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials.
In 1559	13	15	12
1600	26	9	20
1700	33	12	27

ELM

Is a pleasant village, about two miles south-east of Wisbech, and in Domesday book is called "Helle," but is said by many to have taken its name from the number of elm trees with which it formerly abounded. The elm is indigenous to England, and may be said to claim rank in beauty and utility next to the oak. A plant called the Glycyrrhiza Vulgaris, or Common Liquorice, used to be grown here in good quantity.* Between this village and Wisbech St. Peter's, there formerly stood a hospital for lepers, which, in ancient records, is

* Camden, page 418.

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mentioned as the boundary between the two parishes.* These hospitals were generally erected at the extremity of towns, probably because the leprosy was an infectious disease. In the Old Testament, we read of the lepers being expelled the community of the Jews. This disease was once so frequent in England, that there was scarcely a town of note but what had a leper house belonging to it; yet, what is very extraordinary, the disease has now nearly vanished from Europe. It was supposed to have originated in the poor living so much upon fish;† its disappearance is attributed by medical men to the frequent use of tea,‡ and the wearing of linen next the skin.

Elm, with the chapelry of Emneth, in the county of Norfolk, thereto annexed, has a rectory and vicarage, both of which are in the patronage of the see of Ely. The rectory is a sinecure. By pope Nicholas' taxation,§ they are thus charged: Ecclia de Elm cu capella de Emneth, £17.

* Dugdale, page 315.

† Wherever the wages of the poor are reduced to the lowest limits, they must of necessity live on the coarsest and scantiest fare. Men placed under such circumstances are without any sufficient motive to be industrious, and, instead of activity and enterprise, we shall have sloth and ignorance. A too low rate of wages, by rendering it impossible for increased endeavours to obtain any considerable increase of comforts and enjoyments, effectually hinders exertions from ever being made, and is, of all others, the most powerful cause of the idleness and apathy which contents itself with what can barely continue animal existence. If the condition of labourers be too much depressed, the prosperity of the other classes can rest on no solid or secure foundation: the labourers always form the great bulk of society.

‡ "25th December 1660, I did send for a cup of tee, (a China drink) "of which I had never drank before:" a proof of the novelty of tea drinking. *Forsyth's Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 305.

§ Page 246.

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	£.	s.	d.
Value of the rectory in the king's books	17	10	0½
Vicarage	14	15	10

The church of Elm is dedicated to All Saints; the chapel of Emneth to St. Edmund. The church is a noble large building, with a grand tower at the west end, built in a Gothic cathedral fashion, and adorned with carved work, with four small pinnacles at the corners, &c. and a small lead spire. In it hang five bells. There is a very handsome arch at the west end, by which you enter a door into the belfry. It has a spacious nave with two side aisles, a north porch, and chancel, all leaded. The altar stands upon three steps and is railed round. The chancel has four lancet windows; and coronets under the north stalls were painted as if done at the expense of the bishop of Ely.* Over the communion table are written the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the ten commandments. In the year 1250, Nicholas, archdeacon of Ely, granted to Walter de Tylneye and his heirs, leave to build a chapel on his own premises in the marsh at Elm, for the celebration of divine service, the chaplain officiating therein to be approved by the rector; the family to attend divine service in the mother church on the six principal festivals in the year, and all the rights of the said church to continue inviolate. This permission, and the condition on which it was granted, were confirmed by Hugo de Northwold, bishop of Ely, on 21st April 1254. This, probably, was St. Christopher's chapel, near Berryal field, where Sayer's field, and Cotton's common, in Outwell, join; which is mentioned by Dugdale† in the description of certain ancient sewers, ordered to be cleaned out in

* Coles' MSS. † Dugdale, p. 348.

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the year 1589. In 1339 Robert Hakebeach obtained of the bishop a licence for celebrating divine service in his oratory, within the parish of Elm, for three years.* In 1343, Simon de Montacute, bishop of Ely, dedicated the church at Elm, celebrated divine mass therein, and ordained three acolytes or subdeacons.† In 1406 there were four stipendiary chaplains in the church of Elm cum Emneth, viz. Dominus Rogerus Capellanus, Dominus Henricus Derham, Dominus Alexander Mayner, and Dominus Ricardus Albald.‡ In the grants of queen Elizabeth, there is one mentioned in the forty-second year of her reign, whereby she gave up to bisbop Heton a portion of tithes which she held in Elm, formerly the property of lord Essex, of the clear annual value of £8. 13*s.* 4*d.* There was formerly another chapel, dedicated to St. Giles, at Elm, situated at the distance of about a quarter of a mile south-east of the church. It appears to have been formerly surrounded by a moat, and between the site of the chapel and the church there are remains of a wall, and an old arched gate-way, which seem to mark the approach to the chapel. The ground is irregular and slightly elevated, and the site is still known as the Chapel Hill. The land is now in the occupation of Mr. William Purrant. A road, stopped up within living memory, led to this chapel from the east end of the church yard. In December 1824, the Rev. Jeremiah Jackson, A. M. was collated by the lord bishop of Ely to this vicarage, and soon after inducted. The vicar's right to tithe had been for several years questioned, by reason of the variation in the custom of payment, although no legal proceedings were pursued, so as to bring the case to a satisfactory

* Muniments of the see. † Reg. Montacute, fo. 7.
‡ Reg. Fordham, fo. 160.

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issue. The present vicar, after his induction, gave notice that he did not consider the payments heretofore made to his predecesssors to be valid as moduses, which the parishioners resisting, a suit was instituted in the court of Exchequer for the recovery of the value of the vicarial tithes. The suit was of short continuance; for in two years after, viz. on a hearing in Hilary term 1827, before the barons, the parishioners were decreed to account for tithe in kind. Shortly after this decision, the vicar called his parishioners together, and proposed certain terms as to future payment; which proposals, liberal in their offer, were received with satisfaction, and the meeting terminated in that mutual harmony, good feeling, and unanimity, which ought at all times to prevail between a clergyman and his parishioners.

The following rectors and vicars are found on record:

Rectors.

A.D.
1250 Walter de Kirkham occurs.
1254 Nicholas de Ely, afterwards bishop of Winchester.
1293 Jeffery de Kingston, also rector of Downham in the Isle.
1297 Robert Scarlet.
1298 Peter de Arskarn.
1317 and 1339 Henry de Stanton occurs. In 11th Edward II. he had a patent to grant a toft by the chapel yard for the chaplains of the chapel, for their perpetual habitation given by him.
1370 William de Petteworth occurs.*

* William Petteworth, parson of Elm, being disturbed by one Nicholas Macham of his parish, supplicated the king for relief, who ordered the sheriff to clap the said Nicholas in the nearest gaol, until he should answer for the same. 4th Richard II. *Coles' MSS.*

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A.D.

John Copping

1440 Thomas Reynolds.

1455 William ——— domestic chaplain to the bishop of Ely.

1464 Thomas Markham, otherwise Throwland, fellow of St. Peter's college, Cambridge.

William Read, on Markham's resignation.

1467 Thomas Markham, the 2d time.

1488 Thomas Aleyn, A.M.

1500 William Doughty, LL.B. chancellor to the bishop.

1540 Giles Ayre, B.D. prebendary of Ely.

1552 Raphael Caldebeck.

1564 Thomas Barkwith.

1573 Thomas Ithell, LL.D. master of Jesus college, Cambridge, in 1579, prebendary and chancellor of Ely.

1279 Richard Bridgewater, LL.D.

1590 Sir Richard Swale, knight, chancellor of Ely.

1608 Boniface Watts, D.D.

1616 Roger Andrews, master of Jesus college, Cambridge, and prebendary of Ely.

Daniel Nicholls.

1641 Robert Dove, A.M.*

1645 Joseph Beaumont, A.M. master of St. Peter's college, Cambridge.

1646 Thomas Dove, presented by the parliament.†

1651 Henry Johnson, A. M. fellow of St. John's college, Cambridge.

* Whereas the parsonage of Elm cum Emneth is void by the death of Robert Dove, clerk, the patronage of which originally was with the bishop of Ely, a delinquent,—the lords and commons, to the end that the parish may be supplied with a learned, godly, and orthodox divine, have ordered and appointed Thomas Dove, A.M. to be minister there. *Journals of the House of Commons.*

† On this presentment it was ordered that one full moiety of the year's profits, to end at Michaelmas 1646, be allowed to the minister who had preached and supplied the cure for the last six months. *Journals of the House of Commons.* Thomas Dove was buried in the chancel at Emneth.

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A.D.
1700 Robert Tillotson, A.B. fellow of Clare-hall, Cambridge, son of the archbishop of that name.
1738 ——— Potter, D.D. son of Dr. Potter, archbishop of Canterbury, who made the rectory of Elm his option in the diocese of Ely, and presented it to his son.
1770 John Warren, D.D. chaplain to the bishop of Ely, vicar of Wisbech, and afterwards successively bishop of St. David's and Bangor.
——— Waddington, D.D.
1804 George Owen Cambridge, archdeacon of Middlesex, and prebendary of Ely.

Vicars.

1254 Peter ———
Walter de la Mòre.
1302 Hugh ———
1376 John Comberbury.
1393 John Wetyng.
1401 John Stacey.
1404 William Aleyn.
William Stanley.
1474 Edmund Roray.
1540 Nicholas Walpole.
Bernard Huntelly, deprived in 1554.
1573 Mark Saunders.
1576 Richard Dowe.
1578 Robert Linsey.
1596 ——— Griffith.
1599 William Gyles, whose wife, Rachel, was buried at Emneth, in the south aisle of the chapel, and is commemorated by the following verses, inscribed on a narrow brass plate, let into the stone that c[illegible]er remains:

"Restauranda die domini fidissima conjux,
"Hic sita Gulielmi Gyles, requiesce Rahel."

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A.D.
1641 William Allanson, A.M.
1659 John Machin, A.M.
1660 Henry Johnson, A.M. who had held the rectory from 1651, and was buried at Elm 15th November 1662.
1662 Robert Cole, A.M. buried at Elm.
1669 Charles Danks, A.M. fellow of Jesus college, Cambridge.
1698 Thomas Mallabar, A.M.
1709 Thomas Davies, A.M.
—— Martin Challis, A.M. of Gonvile and Caius college, Cambridge.
1729 Edmund Castle, master of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge.
1731 John Newson, A.M. buried at Elm 7th September 1762.
1762 Charles Clarke, of Baliol college, Oxford, F. A. S. buried at Elm 21st November 1780.
1780 John Swaine, A.M. of Peter-house college, Cambridge, afterwards rector of Stretham, where he died in 1802.
1784 Cæsar Morgan, D.D. successively vicar of Wisbech and rector of Stretham, buried in the cathedral of Ely 1812.
1790 George Varenne, D.D. died in October 1824.
1824 Jeremiah Jackson, A.M. of St. John's college, Cambridge.

Many respectable persons heretofore resided in this village, whose names are recorded by monuments erected to their memory within the church.

In the chancel is a mural monument, on the north side, to the Rev. Charles Clarke, F.S.A. collated to the vicarage in 1762, and died in the year 1780.

On the floor is a marble slab to the memory of John Edes, esq. who died 28th February 1824, aged 73. He was one of the acting magistrates of the isle of Ely, a deputy lieutenant of the county of Cambridge,

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and a conservator of the honourable corporation of Bedford level. "To perpetuate the remembrance of departed "worth, this stone was placed by his sorrowing friend "and partner, H. J. Nicholls." Also adjoining is another slab to Mrs. Edes, his wife, who died 30th January 1807, aged 47.

The chancel is parted from the nave by a neat, low, iron railing, with a gate, and in the nave is a reddish marble slab to the memory of Thomas Adams, who died A.D. 1697, aged 67. "He was the last of a very ancient "family. The parishioners of Elm, in respectful re-"membrance of their benefactor, renewed this memorial "in 1777." Also another to the memory of the Rev. Thomas Clarke. On a pew on the north side, near to the chancel, are carved certain arms, viz. a crescent impaling a chevron, int. two swans in chief, and a pair of shears in base: this pew has immemorially been occupied by the person dwelling at Needham Hall. Also, a little further on, is a pew, on which are carved the arms of Jenkinson, viz. two bars, int. three boars heads, and near thereto is a large marble stone to the memory of Thomas Jenkinson, esq. who died in 1753. Another large black slab to John Peacock, gent. who died in 1758; and five slabs to different branches of the family of Squire.

At the west end is a handsome marble slab dedicated to Martha, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Christopherson, who died in 1823, and to Mary, relict of the said Rev. Thomas Christopherson, late rector of Grainsby and vicar of Eagle, in the county of Lincoln, who died in 1824, aged 88. "This stone is laid down by an affectionate "brother and son." Also a memorial to John Newson, thirty-one years vicar, who died in 1762.

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In the south aisle, at the east end, is a mural monument to David Waite, of Wisbech, who died 1st February 1766, aged 75, one of the deputy-lieutenants for the county, in the commission of the peace for the isle and and for the county of Norfolk; also to Ann, his wife, (daughter of John Kelsall, esq. of Wisbech, by Ann, his wife, and) grand-daughter of Robert Balam, esq. of Elm, died in 1752,* aged 59. Near the above, on the floor, is a black marble slab to the memory of the said John Kelsall, Ann, his wife, daughter of the said Robert Balam, and of Jane, the wife of William Pacey, esq. of Boston, and one of the daughters of the said John Kelsall, who died in 1777, aged 27.

At the west end of this aisle is a pavement, raised two steps from the floor, underneath which is a vault, wherein are interred the remains of John Goddard, esq. and Sarah, his wife, and on the wall is a mural monument to the memory of the said John Goddard, who served the office of high-sheriff in 1766, and died in 1787, aged 63; and also of Sarah, his wife, who died in 1780, aged 47.

A handsome marble bason, standing on a pediment, forms the font; near thereto, on the north side, is a plain marble slab to Sarah Furnival, wife of George Morris, esq. captain in the royal navy, who died in childbed 26th April 1821, aged 38, and two of their infant children. Adjoining, is a slab to the memory of Mr. James Sculthorpe, and two children of John and Dorothy Sculthorpe. On a marble lozenge is an inscription to Mary Ann Du Plessis, who died in 1799, aged 82.

* See page 150.

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In the north aisle is a slab to Robert Fincham,* who died in 1667, aged 50. The east window of this aisle is a fine one, and was formerly full of figures, with St. James as a pilgrim in the middle of it. The interior of the church is in very neat order, the pews having been recently painted throughout.

In the church yard, to the north-west of the tower, stand three or four altar tombs of freestone to the family of Jenkinson. A Mr. Jenkinson built a good house at Friday Bridge. His father lived on the bank between March and Upwell, at a farm there, and had the toll where he got his estate.† There are other altar-tombs in the church yard to the memory of the Blackborns; also to John Wrangle; Mr. John Dow, who died in 1798, aged 67; and Mr. John Palmer, of Wisbech, who died in 1825. Under the east window is a monumental stone to John Edes, jun. who died in 1790, in the 21st year of his age.

The manor of Elm formerly belonged to the bishop of Ely, and was held of his capital manor of West Walton. Ancient writings speak of some subordinate manors in this parish, as Benford, Hanstead, and Coldham, of the latter of which Sir Henry Peyton, bart. is proprietor, of whose ancient family we shall presently treat, when we speak of Emneth and Hagbech Hall.

Coldham House was pulled down about the year 1793, when the present neat farm house was erected on the site of the original hall. In 17th Edward II. (1323) Walter de Langton,‡ bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, and treasurer to king Edward I., is stated to

* See description of 'Outwell.' † Coles' MSS. ‡ Dug. p. 301.

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have held the manor of Coldham, with 420 acres of land, *per servic. un feod mil.* In 1372, William Street* is said to be lord of the manor of Coldham, and in 1437, William Vernoun† is mentioned to hold the same manor, and that he, together with his partners, ought to repair a certain bridge in Elm, in a drove called Crane Drove, and another in Wisbech, below the parsonage, which was then broken. It is presumed that the family of Peyton became possessed of this estate in the time of queen Elizabeth, about the same period in which Sir John Peyton purchased the Doddington property. It is accurately ascertained by a terrier of the parish, that in the year 1647, the manor of Coldham belonged to Robert Peyton, esq. who was grandson of Sir John Peyton, the governor of Jersey and Guernsey, and the same is now the property of Sir Henry Peyton, bart.

The building used as a workhouse has every appearance of having been the residence of a respectable family, by its ornamented ceilings, &c.; it belonged at one period to Mr. Thomas Squire, and was purchased by the churchwardens and overseers of the parish in the year 1801, for the purpose of being used as a house of reception for the poor, and was then the property of John Swaine, esq. of Stretham, and had for many years previously been let as a farm house. The estate, when offered to sale, was described as the manor of Vaux, otherwise Vause. Dugdale mentions Beauford or Benford Hall, near to Friday Bridge, then belonging to Alexander Balam,‡ esq. and now the property of Hugh Jackson, esq.§

* Dugdale, page 313. † Ibid. page 317.

‡ This family continued to be of importance for many centuries. We find the name mentioned in the fraternity of the Holy Trinity in Wisbech, (p. 158) and Robert Balam, esq. was high-sheriff for the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon in 1634. § See page 319.

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Friday Bridge is a distinct part of the parish, lying about a mile south of the church, consisting of several respectable houses. The place has been long known by that name, although its origin cannot be traced. So early as 1373,* Dugdale, in his description of a sewer, describes it as beginning at Friday Bridge, and extending to the stone cross of Welle. It also appears that the monastery of Crowland held certain lands in Elm, which on the dissolution came to the crown; these lands, by the description, seem to have been situated between the town and Friday Bridge.

There was another most respectable residence in this parish, called Needham Hall, in former days of very considerable consequence, though by lapse of time reduced to a state of dilapidation, so that in 1804 it was entirely taken down, and the present neat modern house erected on the site of the old one, or rather in front thereof.

This property had been for some centuries in the possession of the Fountaynes, a family of considerable influence in Yorkshire. The late Rev. Dr. John Fountayne, dean of York, held it for many years, when it descended to Miss Catherine Judith Fountayne, who dying in 1824, it devolved to her nephew, Richard Fountayne Wilson, esq. at this time M. P. for Yorkshire. †

* Dugdale, page 316.

† In the seventh session of parliament, in the present reign, (Geo. IV.) one of the Cornish boroughs was disfranchised, and deprived of its privilege, on account of notorious bribery, and its right transferred to the county of York, since which time the freeholders of that extensive county have been authorised to elect four members for the county instead of

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The old mansion was of brick, with a porch in front, and a court yard walled round. The length of the building was one hundred and eight feet, adorned by fifty-two windows, with two large wings, bearing a similitude to the Roman letter E, of three stories in height, with bay windows on the first and second stories. Two spacious oak staircases led to each wing: several of the rooms were twenty feet square, and upwards of twelve feet high. The entrance hall was forty feet by twenty, supported by a row of six oak pillars,* beautifully carved, on stone pedestals. In the hall was an extensive fire place, over which was a curiously carved coat of arms in a shield, and with a crescent and three bars, with supporters, still preserved in the modern house. This description, though it may be considered by some unnecessarily minute, will convey the impression that at a distant period the old structure was a mansion of considerable note and importance. A tesselated pavement and pieces of stone richly sculptured have been dug up near to the hall, which has led to the conjecture that a chapel or religious house once existed in the immediate neighbourhood. In taking down the old mansion, several ancient coins of silver and brass were discovered in the foundation.† So lately as in 1825, some

two, as heretofore. This privilege was exercised for the first time on the general return of members for the present session, commencing in November 1826, when the above R. F. Wilson, esq. was elected one of those four members.

*Two of these ancient pillars are preserved, and now constitute a support on each side of the door in front of the present hall.

†Several old coins of silver and brass, eleven of copper, three of silver not intelligible, two of the size of a shilling of the date of queen Elizabeth, 1569, were found. In 1818, in making a celery trench in the garden, three silver pieces were dug up, one having a ducally

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workmen, in opening a furrow to let off the superfluous water from the land, discovered an earthen vessel, three inches and a half high, and ten inches in circumference.* In the walls of the old hall, which were of great substance, were found a cannon ball of the size of a six pounder, also the remains of a bomb shell. We might have supposed these to have been lodged there during the time of the civil wars; but it appears this part of the country favoured the parliamentary interest, and that Oliver Cromwell and his forces were received in a friendly way, particularly at this mansion.† Needham Hall is at this time the residence of Mr. William Dow, who has enjoyed it for a considerable number of years, and succeeded his father in the same tenancy. Needham is mentioned by Dugdale as giving name to certain mounds and barriers in that part of Elm, such as Needham Bank, Needham Dyke, &c. And in 18th Elizabeth, (1586) it is stated that the first improvement of Needham and Berrial fields commenced by an agreement of the land holders of that district, who at that time undertook to pay an acre shot of sixpence, for defraying the charge thereof.‡ About the year 1713, not far from a tumulus at Elm, an urn full of small Roman brass coins,

crowned head, and round it, the words "John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster;" another a plain head, with "Brutus" over it, and one also with the head of Mercury. In 1818, on deepening a pond near the mansion, was found a coin with the words "Witchford and Ely;" another with "Gulielmus Tertius "Rex," and a figure on horseback. Most of these coins are now in the possession of Miss Anne Graham Dow, of Needham hall, who displays great taste in antiquarian research, and in the cultivation of the fine arts, as well as other amiable accomplishments.

* It is said to be similar to the one in the library of Clare Hall, which is esteemed a great curiosity, and termed a lacrymatory.

† See page 220. (note.) ‡ Dugdale, p. 346.

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most of them of Victorinus and Tetricus, was taken up, and a Roman altar, twenty-six inches high and fourteen broad,* is said to have been found at the same place. Also coins from Gallienus down to Gratian were found in this parish, and deposited with Beauprè Bell, esq. who has given an account thereof in his Bib. Top.

Also so lately as in the year 1785, there was found in a field in Waldersea, in this parish, belonging to Messrs. Edes and Nicholls, an earthen pot, containing a considerable number of small copper coins, chiefly of Valentinian and Arcadius, which was ploughed up.

BENEFACTIONS.

A.D. 1563. William Maynard, by will, gave about seven acres of land, and a house, &c. in Old field, Friday Bridge, called Widow Hill's Farm; the rents to be distributed to the poor as the trustees think proper.

1597. William Payne gave by deed sixteen acres of land, in two pieces, lying in Wales field.

1674. Thomas Coward, by will, gave six acres of land, in Old field, for the purpose of buying thirty yards of cloth, at two shillings per yard, to be made into coats or jackets for ten poor people, and three chaldrons of coals for the poor yearly. He gave the like gift to the poor of March, on condition, if either parish officers should fail in the due disposal of the charities, the other parish to have both gifts.

1689. Thomas Squire, by will, gave twenty-two acres of land, with a house and barn, in Redmore field, and a room for a school, and half an acre of land, in Elm

* Coles' MSS.

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town, to provide a schoolmaster for teaching the children in the parishes of Elm and Emneth to read, write, and cast accounts. The parishioners of Elm have within thee s few years erected an entirely new and convenient school house, for the use of the master and children. Mr. Tibenham is the present master. Mr. Squire also gave twenty shillings for a sermon to be preached on St. Thomas' day, and forty sixpences to the poor on the same day, payable out of four acres of land, late the estate of Daniel Swaine esq. and now belonging to William Bird, situated at the Gooles, in Elm.

THOMAS ADAMS, by will, left four acres of land, lying in New Marsh, Wisbech, near New Common bridge, for one man's coat, two women's gowns, and the remainder, after deducting the necessary expenses, to be given away in bread to the poor. A.D. 1697.

THOMAS JENKINSON, ESQ., by deed, gave to the poor of Elm two acres of land, lying in Wales field, the profits of which are to be distributed among them as the trustees think proper. 1757.

The profits of certain lands called Crowmere have been for time immemorial employed for the benefit of the poor. About 1630 or 1635 a field called Laddus or Elm common was first taken in, at which time one other field called Crowmere, said to contain by estimation sixty acres,* was allotted and given for the sole use and benefit of the poor of Elm, in consideration of their being excluded from commoning in the said field called Laddus, then first taken in and allotted, and by such agreement, the right of cutting firing in Crowmere was

* This probably was intended for forty acres, as by Elm map, Crowmere contains forty-five acres, two roods, eight perches.

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confirmed to the poor of Elm, and all such parishioners as did not own, rent, or occupy lands, houses, or other premises exceeding twenty pounds of yearly rent or value. The number of hassocks allotted to every house or cottage was three thousand, and if any person cut more than three thousand, the overplus was usually given by the musters or fen reeves to some poor widow. No person had any right to turn in or feed on the said piece called Crowmere, any cattle or stock; and by the same agreement, a road to and from the said field was duly set out.

These particulars will be found in the church register about the year 1772, when certain musters or fenreeves were appointed to manage the said piece of land, whose successors at this time let the land called Crowmere, by public auction, and lay out the rents in the purchase of coals and flour, which are distributed among the industrious poor at certain seasons of the year, as agreed upon at a public meeting of the parishioners in vestry. The land is permitted to be ploughed, and the rent is now £ 60. per annum.

The population, by the last returns in 1821, was 691 males, 677 females. Total 1368.

EMNETH OR ENEMETH

Is a hamlet in the parish of Elm, though situated in Freebridge hundred, in the county of Norfolk, and is so called as lying in the meads or meadows. The chapel belonging thereto, which has been mentioned as dedicated to Saint Edmund, is larger than most parish churches, having a nave and north and south aisles, and a chancel.

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In the chapel are several monuments. At the east end of the south aisle, inclosed with iron rails, is a sumptuous one erected altarwise, on which lie the effigies of Sir Thomas Hewar and his lady at full length, and at their feet that of a child, their son, who died young. Over this monument is a canopy of marble, supported by pillars of the same material. On the summit of the canopy are shields, with the arms of Hewar and Oxburgh. It was erected in 1617, by Nicholas Stone, master mason to king James I., who had £95. for it. Also opposite, against the south wall, is a neat mural monument, on the summit whereof is "Hewar, A.D. 1586."

On the floor is a slab to the memory of Frances, the wife of Hewar Oxburgh, who died in 1698. Also slabs to the memory of Joseph Whitehall, who died in 1735, Hewar Oxburgh, in 1781, and Sarah, his second wife, in 1799.

Near thereto is a stone to Dame Audrey Coney, who died in 1763, and a small tablet to William Millicent, who died in 1755.

In the chancel, Thomas Dove, mentioned in the account of rectors as presented by the parliament in 1646, was buried, with the following inscription:

"Here Thomas Dove's interred, whose name alone
"The pulpit would preserve, without this stone.
"Ob. May 1st, 1651."

In the nave are several monumental stones obliterated, two of which appear to have had effigies, probably in brass, now taken away.

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At the west end, a marble slab to Henry Southwell, LL.D. rector of Asterby, in the county of Lincoln, youngest son of Edward Southwell, esq. of Wisbech, who died in 1789.

On the north wall, a mural monument to Robert Banyer, and Mary, his wife, who was daughter to Henry Ferrour, esq. of Wisbech. He died in 1749.

In the north aisle are monumental stones to

Mary Hawkins,
John Damant, on which is the word "Resurgam,"
William Coe,
John Swansborough,
John Boyce.

In the south aisle is a brass plate to the memory of Rachel Gyles,* the wife of a former vicar of Elm.

In this chapel was the chantry of Saint Mary, founded by Sir Adam de Hagbeche, in that part of the south aisle where the monument of Hewar now stands. Also on the north side is a space unoccupied, which appears formerly to have been another chapel or chantry.

There was a free chapel called Berking chapel in this hamlet, and on the 27th May 1389, a licence was granted to the chaplain of Emneth for celebrating divine service there.†

Part of this hamlet belonged to the great manor of the prior of Lewes, in West Walton, which extended here.

* Page 499. † Register of bishop Fordham.

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Melville sc.

HAGBEACH HALL,

Formerly the Seat of Sir Thos. Peyton, Bart.— Taken down in 1806.

Published by H. & J. Leach, West St. 1827.

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The ancient family of Ingoldesthorpe held a manor here called Bellasis, which came into the family of Sir John Cutts, heretofore under-treasurer of England. The bishop of Ely also held a manor which belonged to the see, until granted to the crown in the reign of queen Elizabeth.* The manor of Lovells in Elm likewise extended here.

In this hamlet also stood the venerable mansion called Hagbech Hall, which the ancient family of Peyton made one of their residences for many years. In the 5th king John, A.D. 1203, it appears there was a place called Hagebeche.†

Robert de Hakebeche occurs in 1295, and in 10th Edward III. Roger de Hakebeche was a commissioner to see to the repairs of the banks and sewers in Marshland. In the early part of the reign of king Henry VI. Gilbert Haltoft, one of the barons of the exchequer, held the lordship of Emneth, which he sold to Sir Andrew Ogard, knight, a famous general in the wars of France, who was found to die possessed of it in the 33d year of the same king, (1454,) afterwards it came to the family of Hewar, by the marriage of the widow of Sir A. Ogard. Sir Thomas Hewar, by his will (21st January, 5th Charles I. 1629,) left it to his nephew, Lawrence Oxburgh, the son of his sister Thomasine Hewar; in which family it continued until Diana and Hewar Oxburgh ‡ sold the manor house

* Parkins. Note, p. 114. † Plta. Term Trin. 5th John, Rot. 17.

‡ Hewar Oxburgh married the aunt of Sir Theodosius Boughton, bart. who was poisoned by captain Donnellan, his uncle, by his giving him a draft distilled from laurel leaves, which caused his death, and for which murder captain Donnellan was tried at Warwick assizes, and being found guilty, suffered on 8th April 1781.

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and hall* to Sir Thomas Peyton, bart. from whom it descended to Sir Henry Peyton, the present baronet.

The mansion being a quadrangular building, inclosing a small court or area, was erected in the olden time, when comfort and good sense were prevailing features, it continued standing until the year 1805, when it was pulled down and the materials sold, together with the site. Sir Thomas Peyton (uncle of the late Sir Henry) was accustomed to make this hall his residence during a part of the year, and the period of his arrival in the neighbourhood was always hailed with gladness, highly esteemed as he was by the surrounding gentry, whilst his urbanity of manners confirmed the respect to which the rank and distinction of his ancient lineage so justly entitled him. Mr. Camden† calls this a knightly family, from its having been distinguished in successive reigns with the honour of knighthood. Their first settlement in England is traced to William de Mallet,‡ a Norman baron, who came over with the Conqueror.

* The conveyance was dated 25th June 1720.

† Cam. Brit. in Camb.

‡ It may probably afford some amusement to give a list of the names of the noble captains and gentlemen who came over with, and assisted king William in the conquest of this land. They are to be found in the Chronicles of Normandy. Holinshed has preserved a copy of the Catalogue and Roll, from which the following list is extracted:

"A Catalog of such noble men, lords, and gentlemen of name, as came into the land with William the Conqueror.

Odo, bishop of Bayeulx
Robert, erle of Mortaing
Roger, erle of Baumont, surnamed A la barbe
Guillaume Mallet, seigneur de Montfort
Henrie, seig. de Ferrers
Guillaume d'Aubellmare, seig. de Fougieres
Guillaume de Roumare, seig. de Lithare
Le seig. de Tonque

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The various branches of whose descendants have flourished with high reputation in different parts of the

Le seig. de la Mare
Neel le Viconte
Guillaume de Vepont
Le seig. de Magneuille
Le seig. de Grosmenil
Le seig. de S. Martin
Le seig. de Puis
Guillaume Crespin
Guillaume de Moyenne
Guillaume Desmoullins
Guillaume Desgarennes
Hugh de Gourney, alias Geneuay
Le seig. de Bray
Le seig. de Gouy
Le seig. de Laigle
Le seig. de Touarts
Le seig. de Aurenchin
Le seig. de Vitrey
Le seig. de Trassy, alias Tracy
Le seig. de Picquigny
Le seig. de Espinay
Osmond, seig. du Pont
Le seig. de Estouteuile
Le seig. de Torchy
Le seig. de Barnabost
Le seig. de Breual
Le seig. de Secielme
Le seig. de Houme
Le seig. de Souchoy
Le seig. de Cally
Le seig. de la Riuere
Euldes de Beanieu
Le seig. de Roumilly
Le seig. de Glots
Le seig. du Sap
Le seig. de Vauuille
Le seig. Branchou
Le seig. Balleul
Le seig. de Beausault
Le seig. de Telleres
Le seig. de Senlys
Le seig. de Bacqueuille
Le seig. de Preaulx
Le seig. de Jouy
Le seig. de Longueuille
Le seig. de Aquigny
Le seig. de Passy
Le seig. de Tournay
Le seig. de Colombieres
Le seig. de Bolleber
Le seig. de Longueile
Le seig. de Garensieres
Le seig. de Houdetot
Le seig. de Malletot
Le seig. de la Haie Malerbe
Le seig. de Porch Pinche
Le seig. de Juetot
The Erle of Tanqueruile
The Erle d'Eu
The Erle d'Arques
The Erle of Anieu
The Erle of Neuers
Le seig. de Rouuile
Le Prince de Alemaigne
Le seig. de Pauilly
Le seig. de S. Cler
Le seig. de Espinay
Le seig. de Bremetot
Alain Fergant, Erle of Bretaigne
Le seig. de la Ferte
Robert, fils Heruays, Duc de Orleans
Le seig. de la Lande
Le seig. de Mortimer
Le seig. de Clare
Le seig. de Magny

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kingdom to the present day. The ancient line, which originally bore the appellation of Malet, afterwards

Le seig. de Fontnay
Roger de Montgomery
Amaury de Touars
Le seig. de Hacqueuille
Le seig. de Neaushou
Le seig. de Perou
Robert de Beaufou
Le seig. Meauuon
Le seig. de Soteuille
Eustace de Hambleuile
Geoffry Bournom
Le seig. de Blainuile
Geoffry de Moienne
Auffray and Manger de Carteny
Le seig. de Freanuile
Le seig. de Moubray
Le. seig. de Jafitay
Guillaume Patais, seig. de la Lande
Eulde de Mortimer
Hue, Erle of Gournay
Egremont de Laigle
Richard de Aurinchin
Le seig. de Bearts
Le seig. de Soulligny
Bouteclierd Aubigny
Le seig. de Marcey
Le seig. de Lachy
Le seig. de Valdere
Eulde de Montfort
Henoyn de Cahieu
Le seig. de Vimers
Guillaume de Meuion
Raoul Tesson de Tignolles
Anguerand, Erle of Hercourt
Roger Marmion
Raoul de Gaiel
Auenel de Viers
Pauuel du Montier Hubert
Robert Bertraulé Tort
Le seig. de Seulle
Le seig. Doriual
Le seig. de la Hay
Le seig. de S. John
Le seig. de Saussy
Le seig. de Brye
Richard Dollebec
Le seig. du Monfiquet
Le seig. de Bresey
Le seig. de Semilly
Le seig. de Tilly
Le seig. de Preaux
Le seig. de S. Denis
Le seig. de Meuley
Le seig. de Monceaux
The Archers of Bretuile
The Archers of Vaudreuile
Le seig. de S. Sain
Le seig. de Breanson
Le seig. de Sassy
Le seig. de Nassy
Le vidam de Chartres
Le seig. de Icanuile
Le vidam du Passais
Pierre du Bailleul, seig. de Fescampe
Le Seneschal de Torchy
Le seig. de Grissey
Le seig. de Bassey
Le seig. de Tourneur
Guillaume de Colombieres
Le seig. de Bonnebault
Le seig. de Ennebault
Le seig. de Danuillers
Le seig. de Beruile
Le seig. de Creueceur
Le seig. de Breate
Le seig. de Courtray

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successively took the names of Ufford and Peyton, from the places of its abode and settlement, it being the custom

The Erle of Eureux	Thomas, Erle d'Aumale
Le seig. de Seint Valery	The Erle de Hiesmes;

" With other lords and men of account in great numbers, whose names the author of the Chronicles of Normandie could not come by (as he himself confesseth); in consideration whereof, and bicause diuers of these are set forth onlie by their titles of estate, and not by their surnames, we have thought it conuenient to make you partakers of the roll which some time belonged to Battell Abbeie, containing also (as the title thereof importeth) the names of such nobles and gentlemen of marque as came at this time with the Conqueror, whereof diuerse maie be the same persons which in the catalog aboue written are conteined, bearing the names of the places whereof they were possessours and owners, as by the same catalog maie appeare.

" *The Roll of Battell Abbeie.*

Avmarle	Amay	Berners	Broilem	Bodin
Aincourt	Aspermound	Braibuf	Broleuy	Beteruile
Audeley	Amerenges	Brande and	Burnell	Bertin
Adgillam		Bronce	Bellet	Bereneuile
Argentoune	Bertram	Burgh	Baudewin	Bellewe
Arundell	Buttecourt	Bushy	Beaumont	Beuery
Auenant	Brebus and	Banet	Burdon	Busshell
Abell	Byseg	Blondell	Berteuilay	Boranuile
Auuerne	Bardolfe	Breton	Barre	Browe
Aunwers	Basset and	Bluat and	Busseuile	Beleuers
Angers	Bigot	Baious	Blunt	Buffard
Angenoun	Bohun	Browne	Beaupere	Botelere
Archere	Bailif	Beke	Beuill	Bonueier
Anuay	Bondeuile	Bickard	Barduedor	Boteuile
Asperuile	Brabason	Banastre	Brette	Bellire
Albeuile	Baskeruile	Baloun	Barrett	Bastard
Andeuile	Bures	Beauchampe	Bonret	Bainard
Amouerduile	Bounilaine	Bray and	Bainard	Brasard
Arcy and	Bois	Bandy	Barniuale	Beelhelme
Akeny	Botelere	Bracy	Bonett	Braine
Albeny	Bourcher	Boundes	Barry	Breat
Aybeuare	Brabaion	Bascoun	Bryan	Braunche

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for some ages after the conquest, to distinguish families by the christian name, and the respective places of their

Belesus	Cholmeley	Dodingsels	Engaine	Fitz-Henrie
Blundell	Champney	Darell	Estriels	Fitz-Waren
Burdet	Chawnos	Delaber	Esturney	Fitz-Rainold
Bagot	Comiuile	Delapole		Flamuile
Beauuise	Champaine	Delalinde	Ferrerers	Formay
Belemis	Careuile	Delahill	Foluille	Fitz-Eustach
Beisin	Carbonelle	Delaware	Fitz-Water	Fitz-Laurence
Bernon	Charles	Delausche	Fitz-Marmaduke	Formibaud
Boels	Chereberge	Dakeny		Frisound
Belefroun	Chawnes	Dauntre	Fleues	Finere & Fitz-Robert
Bruts	Chaumont	Desny	Filberd	
Barchampe	Caperoun	Dabernoune	Fitz-Roger	Furniuale
	Cheine	Damry	Fauecourt	Fitz-Geffrey
Camois	Curson	Daueros	Ferrers	Fitz-Herbert
Camuile	Couille	Dauonge	Fitz-Philip	Fitz-Peres
Chawent	Chaitres	Duilby	Filiot	Fichet
Chauncy	Cheines	Delauere	Furniueus	Fitz-Rewes
Conderay	Cateray	Delahoid	Furniuaus	Fitz-Fitz
Colvile	Cherecourt	Durange	Fitz-Otes	Fitz-John
Chamberlaine	Cammile	Delee	Fitz-William	Fleschampe
Chamburnoun	Clerenay	Delaund	Fitz-Roand	
Comin	Curly	Delaward	Fitz-Pain	Gurnay
Columber	Cuily	Delaplanch	Fitz-Auger	Greasy
Cribett	Clinels	Damnot	Fitz-Aleyn	Graunson
Creuquere	Chaundos	Danway	Fitz-Rauff	Gracy
Corbine	Courteney	Dehense	Fitz-Browne	Georges
Corbett	Clifford	Deuile	Fouke	Gower
Chaundos		Disard	Freuil	Gaugy
Chaworth	Denauille	Doruille	Front de Boef	Goband
Cleremaus	Dercy	Durant	Facumberge	Gray
Clarell	Dine	Drury	Fort	Gaunson
Chopis	Dispencere	Dabitot	Frisell	Golofre
Chaunduit	Daubeny	Dunsteruile	Fitz-Simon	Gobion
Chantelow	Daniell	Dunchampe	Fitz-Fouk	Greasy
Chamberay	Denise and Druell	Dambelton	Filioll	Graunt
Cressy			Fitz-Thomas	Greile
Curtenay	Deuans	Estrange	Fitz-Morice	Greuet
Conestable	Deuers	Estuteuile	Fitz-Hugh	Gurry

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habitation; thus William de Malet was so named from Malet, in Normandy, Robert de Ufford from a village of

Gurley	Kaunt	Mohant	Mantenenante	Moren
Grammori	Karre	Mowne	and Manfe	Melun
Gernoun	Karrowe	Maundeuile	Menpincoy	Marceans
Grendon	Koine	Marmilon	Maine	Maiell
Gurdon	Kimaronne	Moribray	Mainard	Morton
Gines	Kiriell	Moruile	Morell	
Griuil	Kancey	Miriell	Mainell	Noers
Greneuile	Kenelre	Manlay	Maleluse	Neuile
Glateuile		Malebraunch	Memorous	Newmarch
Gurney	Loueny	Malemaine	Morreis	Norbet
Giffard	Lacy	Mortimere	Morleian Maine	Norice
Gouerges	Linneby	Mortimaine	Malevere	Newborough
Gamages	Latomer	Muse	Mandut	Neiremet
	Loueday	Marteine	Mountmarten	Neile
Haunteney	Louell	Mountbother	Mantelet	Normauile
Haunsard	Lemare	Mountsoler	Miners	Neofmarch
Hastings	Lauetot	Maleuile	Mauclerke	Nermitz
Hanlay	Lucy	*Malet*	Maunchenell	Nembrutz
Haurell	Luny	Mounteney	Mouet	
Husee	Logeuile	Monfichet	Meintenore	Oteuell
Herioun	Longespes	Maleherbe	Meletak	Olibef
Herne	Louerace	Mare	Manuile	Olifant
Harecourt	Longechampe	Musegros	Mangisere	Osenel
Henoure	Lascales	Musard	Maumasin	Oisell
Houell	Lacy	Moine	Mountlouel	Olifard
Hamelin	Louan	Montrauers	Mawreward	Orinall
Harewell	Leded	Merke	Monhant	Orioll
Hardell	Luse	Murres	Meller	
Haket	Loterell	Mortiuale	Mountgomerie	Pigot
Hamound	Loruge	Monchenesy	Manlay	Pery
Harcord	Longeuale	Mallory	Maulard	Perepount
Hercy	Loy	Marny	Mainard	Pershale
	Lorancourt	Mountagu	Menere	Power
Jarden	Loions	Mountford	Martinast	Painell
Jay	Limers	Maule	Mare	Perche and
Jeniels	Longepay	Monhermon	Mainwairing	Pauey
Jerconuise	Launale	Musett	Matelay	Peurell
Januile	Lane	Meneuile	Malemis	Perot
Jasperuile	Louetot		Malebeire	Picard

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that name in Suffolk, and Robert de Peyton from a seat called Peyton Hall, at Boxford, in the same county, and by this last name the surviving branches of the family are now known. By continual intermarriages

Pinkenie
Pomeray
Pounce
Pouely
Paifrere
Plukenet
Phuars
Punchardoun
Pinchard
Placy
Pugoy
Patefinc
Place
Pampilioun
Percelay
Perere and Pekeny
Poterell
Peukeny
Peccell
Pinell
Putrill
Petiuoll
Preaus
Pantolf
Peito
Penecord
Preudirlegast
Perciuale

Qvinci
Quintiny

Ros
Ridell
Riuers
Riuell

Rous
Rushell
Raband
Ronde
Rie
Rokell
Risers
Randuile
Roselin
Rastoke
Rinuill
Rougere
Rait
Ripere
Rigny
Richmound
Rochford
Raimond

Souch
Shenile
Seucheus
Senclere
Sent Quintin
Sent Omere
Sent Amond
Sent Legere
Someruile
Siward
Saimsouere
Sanford
Sanctes
Sauay
Saulcy
Sules
Sorell
Somersy

Sent John
Sent George
Sent Les
Sesse
Saluin
Say
Solers
Saulay
Sent Albin
Sent Martin
Sourdemale
Seguin
Sent Barbe
Sent Vile
Souremount
Soreglise
Sanduile
Sauncey
Sirewast
Sent Cheueroll
Sent More
Sent Scudemore

Toget
Tercy
Tuchet
Tracy
Trousbut
Trainell
Taket
Trussel and Trison
Talbot
Touny
Traies
Tollemach
Tolous

Tanny
Touke
Tibtote
Turbeuile
Turuile
Tomy and Tauerner
Trencheuile
Trenchelion
Tankeruille
Tirell
Triuet
Tolet
Trauers
Tardeuile
Turburuile
Tineuile
Torell
Tortechappel
Trusbote
Treuerell
Tenwis
Totelles

Vere
Vernoun
Vescy
Verdoune
Valence
Verdeire
Vauasour
Vendore
Verlay
Valenger
Venables
Venoure
Vilan

Verland
Valers
Veirny
Vauvruile
Veniels
Verrere
Vechere
Veffay
Vanay
Vian
Vernoys
Vrnall
Vnket
Vrnafull
Vasderoll
Vaberon
Valingford
Venicorde
Valiue
Viuille
Vancorde and Valenges

Wardebois
Ward
Wafre
Wake
Wareine
Wate
Watelin
Wateuil
Wely
Werdonell
Wespaile
Wiuell."

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with many of the chief families of England, it has not so much increased the splendour of its own stock, as added a new lustre to theirs. The camp, the bar, the senate, the church, the court, and the country, owe to this house some of their great ornaments.* The founder of it died bravely in defence of the city of York, against the Danes; and two of his descendants, who were the first and successively earls of Suffolk, Robert and William de Ufford, were both of them lords high admirals of England in the reign of the victorious Edward III., the former of whom had the honour of being a knight companion of the order of the garter upon the first institution of it,† and was engaged in a continued series of eminent actions.

Robert, the father of the first earl of Suffolk, was created knight of the bath in 31st Edward I. (1302) and both he and Ralph de Ufford, his second son, were lords justices of Ireland; the father in 4th Edward I., the son in 20th Edward III.

So many of this family have been called to do their king and country service in parliament, some to the upper and others to the lower house, that it would be tedious to mention all their names and persons.‡ John de Ufford,§ son to the first, and brother to the second earl of Suffolk, received his education in Cambridge, and proceeded doctor of civil and canon law. He was afterwards promoted to the deanery of Lincoln; but his talents were too large to be confined to a private church: his admirable eloquence and profound knowledge of the

* Dugdale's Baronetage, vol. i. page 110. † Ibid. vol ii. page 47.
‡ Ibid. vol. ii. page 47.
§ Parker's Ant. Eccl. Br. page 263.

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law demanded a higher sphere, and accordingly he was called up to be a member of the king's council and chancellor of England; and after he had for some time filled the highest station of the law with great integrity, he was from thence advanced to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury; after he had sat in this see but a short time, viz. six months and six days, he was swept away in the dreadful pestilence which raged in this kingdom A.D. 1350, dying intestate, upon which Andrew de Ufford,* archdeacon of Middlesex, took out letters of administration to his effects, as heir at law. Thus did the members of this family, by discharging these great stations and offices with abilities and address, reflect credit on the courts of those several kings who employed them, and by being joined in the commission of the peace, and executing the office of sheriffs for their respective counties, which many of them frequently did in successive reigns with honour to themselves and advantage to their country, they acquitted themselves, though in a less brilliant sphere, as eminently serviceable and distinguished members of the community.

There is a particular account of the rise and progress of this family in Dugdale's Baronetage. In this place we shall only give an account of that branch which settled at Doddington, in the isle of Ely.

The first of these was Sir John Peyton, knt. second son of Sir John Peyton, of Knowlton, in Kent, and of Dorothy, his wife, daughter of Sir John† Tindal, who was created knight of the bath at the coronation of queen Anne Bullen.

* Parker's Ant. Eccl. Br. page 268. † Called Sir Robert in vol. I. page 29.

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Sir John Peyton of Doddington was the thirteenth in descent from William de Malet, the Norman baron, and in good and great qualifications no ways inferior to any of his ancestors. He was educated after the politest manner of the age he lived in, by serving in the wars of Flanders, under the most able and experienced soldiers and politicians of that time. From hence he received all those advantages which a good understanding can be supposed to reap from free and familiar conversation with the wisest and most polished men of all nations, met together as upon a public theatre of action. The accomplishments which he brought home with him recommended him to the favour of a princess, who was famed for a nice discernment of the eminent qualifications of her subjects; he was called to her privy council, and made lieutenant of the tower;* and afterwards in the reign of king James I., succeeded Sir Walter Raleigh in the government of the isles of Jersey and Guernsey, in which post, by his prudent and steady management, he settled the English liturgy in the former, where the Geneva discipline had prevailed, and made a good progress in bringing the latter to the same standard of primitive piety. Amidst the sunshine of a court, and the affluence of a large fortune, his conduct was so regular and temperate, that his life was prolonged to the age of ninety-nine years, in so much health and vigour, that he is said to have *ridden buck hunting* three or four days before his death. He married Dorothy,† daughter and heiress of Edmund Beauprè, of Outwell, in Norfolk, esq. and widow of Sir Robert Bell, who was speaker in the house of commons in the 14th of Elizabeth, and chief baron of the exchequer, by whom he had issue, only one son, viz.

* See Engraving. † Ibid.

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Sir John Peyton, who was knighted in his father's lifetime, and succeeded him in his estate. This gentleman was conspicuously distinguished as a polite scholar: he married Alice, the second daughter of Sir John Peyton, of Isleham, bart. and by her had issue, three sons and six daughters:

1st. Robert, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Richard Anderson, of Penley, in Hertfordshire, knt. and died without issue April 26th, 1659.

2d. Algernon, who succeeded his brother in his estate, of whom hereafter.

3d. Henry, who, in the grand rebellion, engaging in the royal cause, was unfortunately killed by his own soldiers at Banbury, forgetting the watchword. His daughters were married as follows: 1st. Elizabeth to Sir Anthony Chester, of Chichley, in Bucks. bart; 2d. Alice, to —— Lowe, esq.; 3d. Dorothy, to Lawrence Oxburgh, of Emneth, esq.; 4th. Frances, to Francis Fortescue, esq. barrister at law, solicitor to queen Mary, consort of king Charles I.; 5th. Susanna, to John Richers, of Tring Hall, in Norfolk, esq. (she died in 1706, in her 90th year, and was buried at Chesterford-Magna, in Essex); 6th. Anne, to —— Brent, of Worcestershire, esq.

Sir Edward Peyton, bart. a collateral branch of this family, wrote a book called 'the Divine Catastrophe of the Kingly Family of the House of Stuart.'

Algernon, second son of Sir John Peyton, was educated at Cambridge, entered into holy orders, and proceeded

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doctor of divinity in that university. He was heir to his brother Robert, (who died without issue) and rector of Doddington, in the Isle of Ely. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Cook, of Chissel, in Essex, esq. by whom he had issue, three sons and three daughters: 1st. John, created baronet December 10th, 1660, 12th Charles II., who dying unmarried, the title expired with him; 2d. Algernon, created baronet March 12th, 1666, 18th Charles II., of whom hereafter; 3d. Henry, who embraced a military life from fourteen years of age, went gradually through the several posts of the army, and was by queen Anne made a brigadier, and governor of Galloway, in Ireland: he died unmarried in 1714, and left behind him the character of having been a good christian and a brave soldier. His daughters were, 1st. Dorothy, who died young; 2d. Elizabeth, married to Gregory Parlet, of Downham, in Norfolk, gent.; 3d. Alice, married first to John Nalson, LL.D. rector of Doddington, and prebendary of Ely, well known to the learned world by his many useful and ingenious writings, and secondly to John Cremer, of Norfolk, gent.: she died in 1717. Dr. Peyton lies buried in St. George's church, Southwark, having died in London in 1667. He added much to the convenience of the parsonage house at Doddington, by making the hall, which before was open to the top, into four lodging rooms, with chimneys, &c. Sir Algernon Peyton, bart, second son to the Rev. Dr. Algernon Peyton, succeeded him in his estate, and married Frances, daughter and heir to Sir Robert Sewster, of Ravely, in Huntingdonshire, knight, (who, surviving him, was married to colonel Skelton) by whom he had issue, one son and two daughters, viz. Sir Sewster, who succeeded him in his title and estate; Anne, married to Philip Bell, of Wallington, in the county

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of Norfolk, esq., and Algerina, to George Dashwood, of Peyton Hall, in Suffolk, esq. who served as colonel in the army, and was the youngest son of George Dashwood, esq. of London: he died in May 1671, and was buried in the chancel of Doddington.

Sir Sewster Peyton, bart.* son and heir to Sir Algernon, was master of the buckhounds to her majesty queen Ann, during the life of his royal highness prince George of Denmark, in joint commission with another gentleman. He married Anne, second daughter to the last named George Dashwood, of London, esq. sister to Sir Robert Dashwood, of Northbrook, in com. Oxon. bart., and to Richard Dashwood, of Cley, in Norfolk, esq. and to the late colonel George Dashwood, of Peyton Hall, in Suffolk, esq. By this lady he had issue, two sons and three daughters, viz. Thomas, heir to his estate and title, of whom hereafter, and Henry, who died of a fever unmarried September 25th 1741, and was buried at Doddington with his ancestors; the christian and the gentleman were happily united in him, and the liberal education which he had in St. John's college, Cambridge, added to each of those characters; the real grief which his friends and relations expressed at his death was the best panegyric that could be made upon him—an unequivocal proof of his many excellent, engaging, and good qualities. Sir Sewster's daughters were, 1st. Anne, married to Richard Dashwood, of Cockley Cley, in Norfolk, esq.; 2d. Margaret, married to George Dashwood, of Peyton Hall, esq.; 3d. Henrietta, who died young. Sir Sewster died 28th December 1717, and lies buried in the chancel of the parish church of Doddington. Sir Thomas Peyton,† son and heir of Sir

* See Engraving. † Ibid.

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GOVERNOR SIR JOHN PEYTON.

13th in descent from Wm de Malet, who came over with William the Conqr Lieut. of the Tower, and succeeded Sir Wm Raleigh in the Government of the Isles of Jersey and Guernsey. His Conduct was so regular and temperate that his life was prolonged to the great Age of 99 Years, in so much Health and Vigour that he is said to have rode a Buck-hunting 3 or 4 days before his Death. Died 10th [illegible] 1661 and buried at Doddington



DOROTHY WIFE OF SIR JOHN PEYTON

Daughter and Heiress of Edmund Beaupré Esqr of Oxwell in Norfolk and Widow of Sir Robert Bell who was Speaker of the House of Commons 14th Eliz and Chief Baron of the Exchequer. He unhappily caught his death of a pestilential Fever at the Assizes at Oxford. 1577.



SIR SEWSTER PEYTON.

only Son of Sir Algernon who was created a Baronet 1667. Sir Sewster was Master of the Buckhounds to Queen Anne. Married Anne Sister of Sir Robert Dashwood of Northbrook, Oxon. Bart died 18th Decr 1717 and buried in the Chancel of Doddington.



SIR THOS PEYTON.

Son of Sir Sewster, High Sheriff for the Counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon in 1743. Died in 1771. S.P.

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Sewster, married the only daughter of Thomas Skevington, of Skevington, in the county of Leicester, esq. (by Elizabeth, his wife, daughter of Sir John Dugdale, of Blythe Hall, in Warwickshire, knight, and granddaughter of Sir William Dugdale, knight) and sister and heir to Thomas Skevington, esq. by whom he had no issue. Sir Thomas was so unfortunate as to kill captain King in a duel in London, for which, however, king George I. granted him a pardon. This document was preserved, and is to be found amongst the family writings. His sister Margaret having married George Dashwood, esq. (son of George Dashwood, of Peyton Hall) left one son, Henry, who, on the decease of Sir Thomas, without issue, took the surname of Peyton, and was created a baronet in 1776, and lived a great part of the year at Hagbech. He married Frances, the sister of the present earl of Stradbroke, of Henham Hall, in Suffolk, by whom he had two sons, viz. Sir Henry, the present baronet, and the Rev. Algernon, rector of Doddington; and four daughters, three of whom are now living; Frances, Louisa, and Harriet. In 1782, on the death of lord Robert Manners, Sir Henry, father of the present baronet, was elected representative of the county of Cambridge, and sat as member until his death, which took place in London in the month of May 1789. At his decease, he left his son and heir, the present baronet, a minor. On the death of general Adeane, one of the members for the county of Cambridge in 1802, the present Sir Henry, having attained his majority, offered himself as a candidate for the county, and after a close contest of five days, in opposition to lord Charles Somerset Manners, one of the most amiable and excellent of men, and therefore most formidable of opponents, was elected member by a majority

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of ninety-two votes.* At the close of that session, Sir Henry Peyton retired from parliament, and much to the regret of his numerous friends and adherents, declined to stand forward as a candidate at the ensuing general election. Sir Henry married in the year 1803 Mrs. Bradshaw, widow of James Bradshaw, esq. and daughter of William Fitzhugh, esq. by whom he has one son, Henry Peyton, esq.

A few only of the distinguished characters having been noticed as above, a more full pedigree of this ancient family is annexed.

There is a considerable number of deeds and charters relative to the family of Peyton, as well as to their lands, &c. in Suffolk and Essex, preserved in the British Museum.† Peyton Hall, in Stoke Newland and Boxford, was granted by William the Conqueror to Robert Malet. Part of the ruins of the hall in Ramsholt, in Suffolk, still remains, particularly the gateway, on which are the arms of Peyton. It has since been the property of the earls of Oxford, lord St. John, and of the family of Waller, and now belongs to the heirs of the late Robert Trotman, esq. of Ipswich. The present baronet served the office of high sheriff for the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon in the year 1808. This family has, for the long period of eight hundred years, proceeded in an even tenor, honourable to themselves, and always

* The total number of votes polled was 3092; for Sir Henry Peyton, 1592; for Lord Charles Somerset Manners, 1500.

† See Halsted's History of Kent, vol. iv. page 210, which contains an account of the Peytons, at Knolton, and their monuments in the church there.

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and Peyton Hall,
a Boxford.

the younger, sold
eldest brother
all his lands in
Boxford.

royal cause, and unfortunately killed by his own soldiers at Banbury, forgetting the watch-word.

—Susan=John Riches.
—Frances=Francis Fortescue.
—Anne=——— Brent.
—Elizabeth=Sir Anthony Chester.

Algernon, created baronet in 1666, (18th Charles II,) succeeded to the estate, and married Frances, daughter and heir of Sir Robert Sewster, of Raveley; buried at Doddington 23d May 1671.

Henry embraced a military life, made brigadier-general, and governor of Galloway, in Ireland; died unmarried in 1724, a good Christian and brave soldier.

—Dorothy died young.
—Elizabeth=Gregory Parlet, of Downham.
—Alice=John Nalson, LL.D. rector of Doddington and prebendary of Ely, known for his useful writings.

buck hounds to
n, second daughter
ndon, sister to Sir
brook, Oxon. bart.
and the late colonel
died 28th December
el of Doddington.
ide Engraving.)

Ann married Philip Bell, of Watlington, esq.

Algerina married George Dashwood, of Peyton Hall, Suffolk, youngest son of George Dashwood, of London.

741,
n.

1st. Anne married Richard Dashwood, of Cockley Cley, Norfolk, esq.

3d. Henrietta died young.

2d. Margaret married George Dashwood, esq.

od, esq. took
eyton, and
onet 17th August
rances, sister of
of Stradbroke.

James Dashwood, rector of Doddington, died 1815.

Margaret.

Penelope.

rances married to
ev. John Haggitt.

Louisa married to David Pennant, esq. of Downing, Flintshire.

Charlotte died unmarried.

Harriet married to Thomas Kingscote, esq. of Kingscote, Gloucestershire.

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preserving the dignity of their ancestors. We witness from time to time new men rising to sudden honours and obtaining great wealth, and themselves or their descendants as suddenly falling into obscurity, whilst this distinguished race, whose ancestors have held many of the highest offices in church and state, still retain a most truly respectable rank in society.

We lament the demolition of the venerable building of Hagbech Hall, and our concern is increased by the reflection, that it has gone far to perpetuate the absence of a family which was long the ornament and delight of this neighbourhood, whose courtesy gratified, and whose elegance refined, all who had the honour of their acquaintance; and we feel the loss the more acutely, inasmuch as amid many conspicuously valuable and meritorious characters, we have few or none qualified by their rank and fortune to take the lead amongst us, and thereby to give weight to our proceedings, and polish and elevation to our manners. It is, nevertheless, some consolation, that there is a worthy scion of this very ancient and honourable stock still in our vicinity, the rector of Doddington, who is characterized by his warmth of attachment to the local interests of this country, and his anxiety to devote his time and talents to the furtherance of every object of public utility, and especially of those great works of drainage which were the care of his ancestors, at the period when the general improvement of the fens was first contemplated; for we find the name of Sir John Peyton in the celebrated Lynn law, in the time of Charles I.* and also that of Robert Peyton confirming the act of sewers in 1636.

* See page 44.

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Henry Peyton, esq. the eldest son of the baronet, has lately attained the age of twenty-one years, and has married Georgiana, the daughter of Sir Christopher Bethel Codrington, bart. of Doddington Park, in Gloucestershire.

The arms are sable, a cross engrailed, or, with a crescent for distinction. Crest, on a wreath, a gryphon sciant, or, the tail between the under legs, and over the back, vert. Motto, "Patior, Potior."

At the extremity of the hamlet of Emneth, towards the south, is an old house on the left hand side of the turnpike road leading to Downham, near the village of Outwell, and about five miles distant from Wisbech; the building is humble in its exterior, and thatched, discovering, however, some antiquity in the style of building. There is no particular history attached to it, only that it has been known by the name of Emneth Lodge.* On one of the wings are certain characters carved as under:

MANINMIRTHHAAE
MERSEAINMINDFORMESAREIS
TRESARMHENMIRTHISATEND

The decyphering whereof may thus be read:

Man in mirth, have mercy in mind,
For measure is treasure when mirth is at end:

Which has induced many to imagine, that at some period, this dwelling has been used as a house of public reception for strangers and travellers.

* See Engraving.

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Melville sc.

EMNETH LODGE,
NORFOLK.

Published by H & J Leach, Wisbech 1817

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OUTWELL,

ACCORDING to domesday book, belonged to the abbey of Ramsey, and is said to have had sixteen borderers* there, with lands valued at five shillings per annum. The capital manor lay in Upwell, but extended into Outwell. Dugdale calls it the town of Welle, which was before called Wylla,† as having its site on a river, viz. the ancient Nene, which passed through this town, and fell into the Ouse at Salters-Lode. On the dissolution of the abbey in 38th Henry VIII., it was granted to Edmund Beauprè, of Beauprè Hall, on payment of a fee farm rent. A patent of king Edward III., in his 23d year, (1348,) shews that a hermitage dedicated to Saint Christopher once stood in the king's highway, with a chapel thereto belonging, near to the church, although every trace of such a building is now lost; it is in the recollection of old persons in the parish now living, that there used to be a sluice named Hermitage Sluice, across the Well river, near to the turnpike gate called Mullicourt Bar, which leads to the presumption, that at some period an ancient chapel may have stood near to such situation, which being distant about a quarter of a mile from the church, agrees with the above description, as having been on the king's highway, and near to the church.

Mullicourt priory was also in this parish, which was of the order of St. Benedict, and stood on the left of Well river coming from Wisbech, a little beyond the above turnpike gate called Mullicourt Bar, which priory appears to have been founded in the time of the Saxons.

* For description of bordars or borderers, see page 120, (Note.)

† Dugdale, page 307, A.D. 1338.

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Inundations of water, both fresh and salt, produced such sterility, and rendered the ground in this particular so poor, that, added to the great expenses and charges in repairing the lands and houses, there was not maintenance left sufficient to support one monk, wherefore by licence of Henry VI. it was united and appropriated to the priory of Ely. The site and lands are now vested in the dean and chapter of Ely, and by virtue of a lease from that body, are at this time held by the representatives of the late amiable bishop Horne, of Norwich, who must ever rank high as a sincere and exemplary christian.

The village of Outwell lies on both sides of the river, like that of Upwell, next mentioned; both together form a street three or four miles long.

The church is dedicated to St. Clement, and is a large handsome building, consisting of a nave, with north and south aisles, and a chancel embattled with stone and brick; it has a square tower, with a ring of six bells and a town clock. The church stands in what was formerly an island, the best half of which forms the church yard, and is in the deanery of Fincham, and the archdeaconry of Norwich, though the rectorial house and part of the parish are in Cambridgeshire, and in the diocese of Norwich. In one of the chambers of this house were the arms of bishop Alcock, with his device on two other panes of glass, viz. a cock on a mound.* The rectory is in the gift of the bishop of Ely. The altar is on one step, and railed in. The length of the church is seventy-eight feet, and in the nave is a handsome brass eagle,† now placed

* Coles' MSS.

† The brazen eagle, which is often used for a reading desk, is very ancient. It was meant to designate St. John. *Fosbroke*, vol. i. page 308.

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over the font; the roofs of the aisles are beautifully carved, that of the south aisle is supported by saints and angels, bearing scrolls in their hands, and the anchor, the emblem of St. Clement, carved thereon. There is a south porch with a chamber over it, formerly used as a parish school; at the east end of the south aisle, inclosed within a screen, is the chapel of St. Mary, the former burial place of the Beauprè family. The pavement is of black and white marble, for which pavement and a monument, Beauprè Bell (the last of that name who lived at the hall and died in 1741) left £150. There is a window in this chapel, with a considerable quantity of beautiful painted glass, representing several figures of saints, apostles, &c. done in a lively and masterly manner. The top figure is the ancient and profane representation of the Almighty,* in robes of blue, seated in a chair of gold, with the globe in his hand; and also a representation, in very vivid colours, of a chalice, with the eucharist; figures also of St. Edmund the king, St. Edward the confessor, St. Anthony, St. Lawrence, &c.

Against the south-east wall of this chapel stands a very lofty grey marble monument, raised from the ground, on the summit whereof is the shield of Beauprè, with its quarterings, and an inscription, "Edmundus de "Beauprè Armiger, qui obt quarto decimo die mensis "Feb. ao. dni. millesimo quingent. sexagesimo septimo "cujus animæ p'pit," &c. In the compartments of a window near to another beautifully roofed chapel, on the north side of the church, are two full length paintings

* In the church of St. Lateran, of Rome, behind the high altar, stands a chair, in which God is said to have sat, and whoever sitteth therein hath the third part of all his sins released. *Blomefield's History of Norfolk.*

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in glass, of Moses and Aaron, the latter in his robes as high priest; one of the figures is less perfect than the other. In this church there appear formerly to have been five guilds, viz. of Corpus Christi, St. Mary, St. Christopher, St. John, and St. Clement, and numerous memorials of the interment of the ancient family of the Bells, from 1513 * to 1741.

The east chapel of the north aisle was appropriated formerly to the family of Fincham, whose arms abounded in the stone-work and windows. About the middle of this ancient chapel, to the north, is an old grey marble, with a plate of brass, and this inscription: "Hic jacet "Margaret Haultoft, quonda ux Gilberti Haultoft, uniu "Baron, sccii nup. dni Henrici VI. Reg. Angl. cuj. aie "ppciett D." This Margaret Haultoft was mother to an heiress, who married a Fincham, for the Fincham arms,† quartering Haultoft, are in stone on the outside of the chapel, over the east window, and several times within, so that it may be supposed that a son by this marriage was the founder of this chapel. Within the chancel lies the body of John Fincham, esq. who died in 1709, in the 80th year of his age; another of the family lies buried in the north aisle of Elm church before mentioned.‡ Also the stone shields, which support the beams and roof of this chapel, are the arms of the Finchams. A Gilbert Haultoft acted at a session of sewers held at Wisbech in 1580.§

* See page 539.

† See page 41. The arms of Fincham are engraved five times on the garden wall on the right hand of the King's Gate in Trinity college, Cambridge, that wall being built by Thomas Fincham, a fellow of King's hall, near the seniority, in 1485. *Coles' MSS.*

‡ See page 503. Coles' MSS.

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In the chancel is a monumental stone "To the memory "of Elizabeth, the beloved wife of the Rev. William "Hardwicke, rector of the parish, who died 7th June "1826, in the 37th year of her age."

There are two ancient bridges over the Well river, one called the Isle, and the other the Norfolk bridge; upon the former is carved an anchor, the emblem of the saint to whom the church is dedicated. This river is the boundary of the county of Norfolk from the isle of Ely, the north side thereof being in Norfolk, and the south side in the isle.

The parish registers extant commence in the year 1559, but without the signature of either rector or curate, from whence may be collected the names of the following rectors.

A.D.

1578 William Stanton. About this time the rector is said to have a parsonage, &c., and three acres of arable and three acres of pasture adjoining to his house. This pasture is supposed to have been purchased and given to the church.

1598 Andrew Bradenham. In his answer to king James' queries, in 1603, he says there were 320 communicants in his parish.

1617 Samuel Calverley, A.M. presented by the king.

1654 John Leigh, A.M. admitted by the commissioners at Whitehall, appointed for the approbation of public preachers.

1709 Thomas Pyle, A.M. on the death of the Rev. John Leigh, presented by the bishop of Ely.

1722 Simon Hamlen, who acted as a magistrate for the isle of Ely many years.

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A.D.
1758 Henry Southwell.
1760 Richard Oram, also rector of Leverington.
1771 Ambrose Eyre, also rector of Leverington.
1796 Timothy Matthews.
1804 William Hardwicke, M.A.

In the register of burials, A.D. 1769, March 14th, appears the following entry:

William Jagger, infant,
Elizabeth Jagger, infant,
Mary Yallop, infant,
John Blockley, infant.
} These were the children of Mary, the wife of Samuel Blockley, by her husbands, Jagger, Yallop, and Blockley, who all lost their lives by the injudicious use of a mercurial preparation for a certain cutaneous disease, and were all buried in the same grave.

There is a manor called Bardolph, in Outwell, which belonged to baron Haultoft, who left it to his daughter, and at length it came by marriage to Thomas Fincham, esq. in which family it remained for many years, when it became the property of Heaton Wilkes, esq. brother of John Wilkes, who at one period was engaged in many political struggles,* and was sold by him to the late James Lee, esq. of Upwell, Mr. Boyce, and Mr. Allenby, the latter of whom disposed of his portion in lots, but the remaining part is still enjoyed by the two other gentlemen, or their representatives. The house in the occupation of the widow of Robert Atkin, situated nearly opposite to Beauprè Hall, on the right hand side of the canal from Wisbech, is supposed to have

* John Wilkes died in December 1797: he published several political pamphlets and speeches.

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been built upon the site where the mansion of the Fincham family stood.* Formerly a stone cross stood at the boundary of this parish, called by Dugdale, the stone cross of Welle,† near the corner where Berryal field, Needham Sayers field, and Cotton common, join in Outwell, close to a cottage built some time since by Mr. Holman; no remains of this cross now exist, though the tradition is prevalent, that a chapel belonging to one of the guilds before mentioned stood at this junction. The history of Norfolk mentions a school at Outwell, which seems to have been an error, as there is no record of its existence, nor of any lands having ever belonged to a foundation of that nature; nor has the site of such a building ever been ascertained. It appears that in the 13th year of king Edward III. a pipe was ordered to be laid in the bank of Christian de Beauprè,‡ opposite to the *school*, yet a doubt arises whether the word ought not to have been written "sholl," meaning a drain or sewer, as afterwards in 20th Henry VIII. (1528,)§ "the sholle of Outwell" is ordered to be scoured out, and in 1589,‖ it is recited that the fen called Needham and Berryal Fen, lying in Elm and Well, had anciently been drained into the little lode, called the "sholle," at the stone cross, and so by Well river into Ouse at Salters-Lode.

The Benefactions.

Lynnis' dole, arising from the rent of eight acres of land in Elm, is distributed annually on Christmas eve, to the poor on the Norfolk side of the parish.

* The last of the Fincham family was buried in 1709. See page 534.
† Dugdale, page 316, A.D. 1380. ‡ Ibid. page 308. § Ibid. 330.
‖ Ibid. page 348.

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Lambert's dole, consisting of one pound, out of the rent of a farm in Elm, for the use of the poor on both sides of the parish. Besides which, several other parcels of land have been left for benevolent purposes, viz.

The rent arising from a house and three acres of land in Outwell, in the isle, distributed to the poor on both sides of the parish annually, on old Christmas day.

Also eight acres of land in Outwell, isle, distributed at the same time.

Also eleven acres of land in Euximore drove, in Upwell.

Also ten acres adjoining the above.

Also three acres of land in Emneth, the rents of which are distributed on old Christmas day.

It is a singular circumstance, that there is no record to be found as to the names of the persons by whom, or the time when the said five last mentioned parcels of land were given. Feoffees are occasionally appointed from among the parishioners, who collect the rents and distribute the amount at the appointed periods. Until within the last twenty-six years, the rent arising from these lands was distributed in fourpenny loaves to every parishioner, who would accept the same, without distinction of rich and poor, and the overplus, if any, was applied to the repairs of the causeways, bridges, and church bells. From that time to the present, the feoffees have discontinued the above distribution of the loaves, and appropriated the rent as follows—£ 10. to the overseers of the poor in aid of the rates; £ 10. to the churchwardens for repairs of the church, and the expense of sending to school a portion of the children

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of the poor: the surplus remaining is then distributed among the poor. The average amount of the produce of the above charities is estimated at £70. per annum.

By the population return made under the act 1st George IV. taken in 1821, there appeared to be 201 males, and 197 females, making together 398.

Beauprè Hall Manor.

The site of this manor is in Outwell, in Norfolk, and takes its name, "Beauprè," or "de Bello Prato," from the fine meadows which surround it. The first lord of this manor on record is *Sir Thomas de Saint Omer*, in the reign of Henry III. This family is on the roll * amongst those persons of note and eminence who came over with William the Conqueror. Hugh de St. Omer is mentioned as a baron of the realm by Matthew Paris, and no doubt was seated here near the time of the conquest. The daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas de St. Omer, who lived in the reign of Henry I., married John, son of Gilbert de Beauprè, whose ancestors had considerable possessions. Nicholas, a descendant, who died in 1513, was buried in the chapel of St. Mary, in the church of Outwell, amongst his ancestors, leaving a son, Edmund, who died in 1567, and whose daughter, Dorothy, married Sir Robert Bell, whereby the manor of Beauprè was vested in his family in 1559, and so continued until the death of Beauprè Bell, esq. in 1741.

Sir Robert † unhappily caught his death, from a pestilential fever at Oxford assizes, in 1577. Beauprè

* See copy of the roll of Battle Abbey, page 520. † See page 523.

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Bell, the fourth lineal descendant from Sir Robert, married Margaret, daughter of Sir Anthony Oldfield, of Spalding, baronet, in 1720, and by whom he had one son, Beauprè Bell, and two daughters, of whom the youngest married William Greaves, esq. of Fulbourne, Cambridgeshire. The son was educated at Westminster school, afterwards admitted of Trinity college, Cambridge, and soon commenced a genuine and able antiquary. He made considerable collections of church notes in his own and the neighbouring counties, all which he bequeathed to the college where he received his education. Beauprè Bell, sen. had many singularities, hardly allowing his son necessaries, and suffering his house to be much dilapidated. He had five hundred horses of his own breeding,* many above thirty years old, unbroke, which he allowed to come even into the very hall, then uncovered. On his death the son succeeded to his estate, which he did not long enjoy, and dying of a consumption unmarried, in 1741, left the reversion, after the death of his sister, (who was then unmarried) with his books, valuable medals, seals, drawings, and coins, to Trinity college, Cambridge; but his sister afterwards marrying William Greaves above mentioned, the entail was cut off. This last Mr. Bell was buried in the family burying place in St. Mary's chapel, in Outwell church. The ancient hall was a building of considerable note, but after it had suffered so much by dilapidations, a great part of it was entirely taken down, and the residence fitted up in an elegant manner by Mr. Greaves, who expended a large sum of money on its

* This number of horses seems immense, but it is said the earl of Uxbridge had as many, and the late duke of Ancaster's brother in 1786 had 1500.

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Melville sculp.

BEAUPRÉ HALL,
In its Ancient State.

Published by F. C. J. Lauch, Westbrook St.

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reparation. The hall, together with the manor, is now the property of Richard Greaves Townley, esq. of Fulbourne, whose brother, the Rev. William Gale Townley, rector of Upwell, now resides in the mansion.* The family of Beauprè Bell had intermarriages with many principal families in Norfolk, &c.

In the History of the Gentlemen's Society at Spalding, in Lincolnshire, are several particulars relative to the family of Beauprè. Maurice Johnson, esq. a native of Spalding, afterwards of the inner temple, London, was the founder of the Spalding society.†

Mr. Greaves was also in correspondence with this society. He was elected by the university of Cambridge their commissary in 1726, which office he resigned in a handsome manner, and presented a piece of plate, value £50. to his college.

In a list of the Spalding members in 1729, appear the names of Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Hans Sloane, Sir Richard Ellis, doctors Bentley and Stukely, Mr. Pope, Mr. Gay, Mr. Rogers, Messrs. Maurice and Walter Johnson, and commissary Greaves. Beauprè Bell is also spoken of with honour, as giving weight to the proceedings of this learned body.

UPWELL

Lies in the hundred and half of Clackclose, on the western part of Norfolk, together with Outwell, but although the greater part lies in Norfolk, still a con-

* The annexed Engraving represents the ancient venerable hall of Beauprè, in the original state, previous to the dilapidations.

† See the History of this Society.

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siderable part is in the isle of Ely. On the dissolution of religious houses, the hundred was separated from the half hundred.* The estate, which was vested in the crown, was granted 7th Edward VI. to John Dudley, duke of Northumberland, who conveyed it next day to Edmund Beauprè, esq. of Outwell.

The church is a handsome pile of building, dedicated to St. Peter, consisting of a nave and two aisles, it has a wooden roof, with numerous projecting figures of angels, their wings expanded, beautifully carved. The chancel is of stone, embattled with brick, and covered with lead. The length of the nave is seventy-one feet. In this church is a handsome brass eagle, supported by three lions, which is placed over the clerk's seat, and serves as a desk.† The nave is supported by neat pillars, forming six handsome arches on each side, with as many windows over them. At the east end of this nave, on the south side, is a stone turret, and a staircase, which led to the rood loft,‡ and on the north side is a table of benefactors. The church stands in the county and archdeaconry of Norfolk, diocese of Norwich, and deanery of Fincham. The reason of this church, and a few others in the same deanery and county of Cambridge, being out of the diocese of Ely, and in that of Norwich, is, that this part being the east side of the old boundary between the Mercians

* In 1683, a robbery being committed near Shouldham Thorpe and Stradset, the township of Upwell and Outwell refused to pay certain proportions charged upon them, whereupon a suit of law was commenced, they pretending to be in the liberty of the half hundred of Clackclose. But on a full hearing, it was decreed by Sir Robert Adkins, lord chief baron in 1689, that they should forthwith pay their shares, being members and parts of the hundred of Clackclose.

† See page 532. ‡ See page 242.

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and the East Angles, never made a part of the old diocese of Lincoln, out of which that of Ely was taken, but belonged to the bishop of the diocese which is now fixed at Norwich.

In the tower of the church hang six large bells, with a town clock. The altar stands on an elevation of three steps, railed in, and the altar piece is very neat. There is a place for holy water in the south wall near to the east. It has a porch of stone, covered with lead, and a room over it. On the old door are several swans carved, probably as a rebus, signifying some benefactor of that name. The north aisle has a neat oak roof, with angels, &c. as the nave, and on the braces are many swans carved.* At the east end of this aisle have been a chapel and altar. The south aisle has also a roof of the same work as the north, ornamented with swans. A small neat organ is fixed up in the church, purchased and presented to the parish by the present worthy rector. There was formerly a screen, removed about seven years since, which divided the chancel from the nave, whereon was painted our Saviour bearing his cross, the ascension, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, the trinity, and an altar, with a cup and wafer supported by two bishops. The chancel roof is also supported by angels, as the nave, but not of equal beauty. In the chancel is a marble grave stone, with a plate of brass, on which is the portraiture of the man and

* About the fifteenth century, nothing was more usual than to transmit to posterity the names of benefactors, persons interred, &c. by way of rebus or hieroglyphical marks. Thus, in the chapel of St. Erasmus, at Westminster, built by Abbott Islip, an eye, with a slip of a tree,—a youth slipping from the branch of the tree, with a label in his mouth, "I slip."

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his wife, behind the man kneel seven sons, and behind the wife, four daughters. These represent the eleven children of Sinolphus Bell, esq. and Jane, his wife. There are some lines to the memory of the said Jane Bell, who died in 1621, æt. 62.

Above the screen before mentioned, which fronted the chancel, was a large piece of painting, representing the church of England, by a venerable matron clothed in white, crowned, and seated on a throne: at her feet were the words, "The Church of England:" on her knees lay the bible and common prayer book, &c. In her left hand she held a cup, by which was written "Drink "ye all of this." Her right hand pointed to a font, round which stood godfathers and godmothers, &c. and an infant in the arms of one, and the words "Suffer "little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Over the head of the venerable matron, "Many daughters "have done well, but thou exceedest them all." Near the matron was the communion table spread, and communicants on their knees, with a poem underneath. Here are several tombstones in memory of the families of Butler, Ashton, Dymond, Audley, &c. In the church yard is an inclosure, surrounded with iron rails, to the memory of the Rev. Hugh James, a former rector. It is stated, that he inclosed this piece of ground for himself and family, as thinking it "a custom of too "much presumption and too little piety, to defile the "house of the most holy God with the contemptible "carcases of sinful men." Sir Matthew Hale used to say the churches were for the living, and the church yards for the dead. Mr. James married Philippa, of the ancient and honourable family of Hobarts, near Loddon, in Norfolk, by whom he had Lucy, who married

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Mr. Thomas Audley, of Upwell, and died in 1740, æt. 68. There is also an inscription to Thomas Audley, who died in 1739.

Here also was a priory of Gilbertines, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, it was a cell to Sempringham, in Norfolk, founded in the reign of king John, and valued at the dissolution at £ 13. 6*s*. 1½*d*. This seems to have been situated on the isle side, near to the church bridge, and was some time since purchased by Mr. Edmund Saffery, of Downham, of T. G. Ewen, esq. of the city of Norwich.

Marmound priory, decayed many years since, was also in this parish, in that part which lies in the isle of Ely and county of Cambridge, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, having been founded by king Richard I., who gave three hundred acres of fine pasture in Upwell and Outwell, to have the prayers of three priests in the said house. In 1520, as appears by documents, the state of the house was then very mean. It was surrendered at the time of the dissolution of monasteries, and then valued at £ 10. 7*s*. 7*d*. The estate belonging to this priory was granted by queen Elizabeth to Percival Bowes and John Moryer, and by various mesne conveyances, the same is now become the property of Mr. Bacon, by purchase from Thomas Audley, esq. late of Lynn. It lies on the road leading from Upwell to March. In 33d Henry VIII., Thomas Manners, earl of Rutland, had a grant of the manors of Upwell, Outwell, Elm, and Emneth.* In 1539, the rectory was presented as a

* Dugdale's Baronetage, vol. ii. page 296. See also Coles' MSS. vol. 35. The noble family of Manners does not at this day hold any manor or estate in this parish, or in the immediate district, but from their possessions in other parts of Cambridgshire, this family has always held a considerable

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grant from the abbot of Ramsey; after this the patronage came to Edmund Beauprè, esq. from whom it descended to the present patron, Richard Greaves Townley, esq. The living is valued in the king's books at £16. This very populous and extensive village lies on each side of the navigable river Nene, which divides the counties of Norfolk and Cambridge. The parsonage house is a handsome, venerable building, standing on the south side

share of influence in the public transactions of the county, as well as in its representation, which has been frequently conferred upon the younger branches of this ancient lineage, the duties of which have been discharged by them with marked satisfaction on the part of their constituents. Many of this noble family we know were heretofore possessed of great dignity and power, and became conspicuous in the state, as well as distinguished in the historical annals of the country. John, marquis of Granby, grandfather of the present duke, was celebrated as a warrior. In the rebellion of 1745, he raised a regiment of foot at his own expense, for the defence of the country against the rebels, and on many occasions displayed eminent skill, accompanied by personal valor; and when lord George Sackville was appointed to the command of the British and Hanoverian horse, at the battles of Minden, Warburg, &c., the marquis of Granby was his second, and prince Ferdinand, after the battle, ordered it to be declared to lieutenant general, the marquis of Granby, that he was persuaded, "if he had had "the good fortune to have had him at the head of the cavalry of the right "wing, his presence would have greatly contributed to make the decision of "that day more complete and more brilliant." The marquis dying in the lifetime of his father, the title descended to his son, Charles, who died in the year 1787, during his vice-royalty of Ireland, leaving John Henry, the present duke, his heir. Lord Robert Manners, the uncle of the present duke, was connected with the glories of our navy, and lost his life at an early period in that splendid and decisive victory obtained by lord Rodney over the count de Grasse in 1782. John, the third duke, as well as Charles, the late duke, were both patrons of the arts, in the fullest extent of that word, for they were not content to look at and admire the dawning of genius in the infant mind, but sought out excellence wherever it could be found, and cherished and protected it. John Henry, the present duke, accomplished as he is with all polite learning, does honour to his country and the age, by patronising the arts, whilst Belvoir Castle continues to possess one of the best collections of paintings in the kingdom. His grace,

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of the church yard, within a brick wall, with two high turrets on it. The house and church stand by the large bridge, on the side of the river which runs through the town. There are also some good houses in the village, particularly a house once belonging to the famous John Wilkes, esq.* inhabited at one time by Francis Dixon, esq. receiver general of the county of Cambridge, and a considerable merchant here, who acted as steward for Mr. Wilkes' estate in this parish. In the 4th king John, (1202) the town was of such account, that it appears from the pipe roll, that the then abbot, as lord of it, had a "mercate" here. Also king Henry VI. granted to the bishop of Ely, and John, abbot of Ramsey, one common and one open market weekly, with a fair yearly on St. Peter's Day, at Upwell, with all the profits, &c.

In the 18th century were the following rectors:

A.D.

1701 Hugh James, D.D. presented by Beauprè Bell, esq.
1740 Timothy Rutter,
1757 Richard Walker, D.D. by William Greaves, esq.
1765 Edward Pemberton, by ditto,

inflexibly guided by honour and principle, is rich in that satisfaction which arises from the practice of every kind and generous feeling that can adorn the human heart. His brother, lord Charles, served in the Peninsular war with high reputation, and received marks of confidence from the illustrious Wellington, who, by his unparalleled victory of Waterloo, achieved the safety of the country, and the tranquillity of the world, and raised the British name to the highest pitch of eminence. Lord Charles has been lately promoted to the rank of major general in the army. His lordship at this period represents the county of Cambridge, in the seventh successive parliament, a proof of the high estimation in which his public character is held.

* See page 536.

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A.D.

1798 Jonathan Townley, by Richard Greaves Townley, esq.

1812 William Gale Townley, by ditto.

There is an ancient building near to the bridge of Upwell, which, by its appearance, seems, and is generally supposed, to have formerly belonged to some chapel or guild. It is the last house in Upwell, on the road to Outwell, and is the property of William Hopkins, but at present enjoyed by Mr. Thomas Berry, who has a life interest therein. What strengthens the idea of *its* having been an ancient religious house is, that there is a road or drove way adjoining, still called Pious Drove.*

Hemp and flax have been cultivated in the isle of Ely near five hundred years, as appears by an order of sessions of sewers held at Wisbech 26th June, 14th Edward III., (1340,) when, amongst other things, *it* was ordered, that for the future no man should dig turves nor slacks in the common droves of Welle and Elm, for *diving* of flax or hemp in the common ditch or sewer, to the nuisance of the commonalty. The culture of this plant is not mentioned as new, and is therefore probably of a much more ancient date.

In 1603, five hundred and twenty-five communicants were returned to be in the parish, and by the last population returns in 1821, there appeared to be five hundred and sixty-five males, and five hundred and eighty-three females, together eleven hundred and forty eight, being an increase of two hundred and fifteen within the last ten years.

* Bishop Tanner's Not. Monast. mentions a small priory near Upwell, called Thurling: the value per annum £9. and was part of Sir Thomas Gresham's estate, which he left to his wife, Ann, about 1579. *Coles' MSS.*

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The following benefactions are recorded:

Thomas Lamb, of Upwell, gave by will to the poor of this parish, in Norfolk and the isle of Ely, a messuage and three acres of land, in Plawfield, Upwell, to which a parcel of land in Neat Moor, abutting on Popham's Eau north, was allotted by the adventurers. The rents are distributed by the churchwardens at Christmas. A.D. 1562.

John Fox by will gave to the poor of Upwell, in the isle, a house, with two acres of land, abutting on the river Nene. 1626.

Also a lot in Euximoor, abutting on the sixteen-feet drain.

Also to the poor of Upwell, in Norfolk, one house, abutting upon Small Load Creek, with a lot of land abutting upon Welney road; the rent of both these bequests is distributed on Easter Monday.

Also a house adjoining, abutting upon the said creek, with a lot in Neat Moor, the rents to be applied to the repairs of Upwell church.

The profits of three acres of land in or near Adcock's Hill, in high fen, and of

Three acres in Shrews-nest, are distributed to the poor on the isle side.

Matthew Batman gave by his will £5. per annum out of his estate for ever, to be distributed amongst the poor in the isle side, in clothes at Christmas.

John Boss gave by will £10. to the poor in Upwell, in Norfolk, the interest or rent to be distributed in bread to the poor yearly.

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Thomas Dixon gave £20. to the poor, both on the Norfolk and isle sides, the rent to be distributed in money on Good Friday.

The rents of these several lands are given away in money on St. Thomas' Day in every year, except where otherwise directed.

The Rev. Gale Townley, the rector, has established and endowed a free school for the instruction of boys and girls from eight to eleven years of age, in useful learning.

A.D. 1819. James Lee, esq. erected five almshouses for the like number of poor widows, each to have ten bushels of coals at Christmas, besides their living free of rent in the house. There was formerly a quakers' chapel in this town, situated about a quarter of a mile south-east of the church. The burial ground is still preserved, wherein are some memorials of the interment of persons of that persuasion. A devise of some land lying in Fakenham, in Norfolk, was left to poor persons of that belief, living in the parish of Upwell; but none of that denomination being now resident in the parish, who claim the benefit of the charity, the funds arising from the land are applied towards the general benefit of the society.

WELNEY.

THIS hamlet lies on the bank of the old river Ouse, which formerly had its natural course that way. It has a chapel, which is an appendage to the rectory of Upwell. The old Bedford, and the Hundred Feet or new Bedford, rivers pass by this place. Great improvements

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in this part of the country have lately taken place, and much praise is justly due to the Rev. Gale Townley, the rector, for his laudable exertions in contributing to the general amelioration. The road from the Downham turnpike to Littleport, leading to the Hundred Feet river, has been gravelled, and put into a good condition, so that the communication with Ely is much facilitated. Indeed the face of this country is entirely changed, and the traffic daily increasing, to the great advantage and accommodation of owners and occupiers of estates, and other inhabitants in the neighbourhood, as well as of consequent public utility. The next object of importance was the operation of an act obtained in the year 1824, for amending the road from Cambridge to Ely, and other roads therein mentioned, and making a turnpike or branch road, from or near the town of Littleport, to the ferry or floating bridge over the Hundred Feet river in Welney, which branch road is by the said act called that of the north-west district.* This object obtained, led to another plan for effecting a more certain communication for the public than the means afforded by the ferry, which the same worthy rector undertook at his private expense; and, considering that a suspension bridge was in its nature peculiarly well adapted for a country subject to be overflowed, he resolved upon introducing one of those curious specimens of modern ingenuity and art, by constructing such an one, to be carried over the Hundred Feet river. He laid his plan before the hon. corporation of Bedford Level, with a proposal to erect such bridge, on being permitted to take a certain easy toll from

* At this period (August, 1827) some spirited adventurers have signified their intentions to accommodate the public by establishing a coach, to run from Ely, along the new road, over the suspension bridge, through the towns of Upwell and Outwell, to Wisbech.

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all persons passing over it. The Bedford Level corporation, applauding the public spirit of Mr. Townley, gave every facility to the accomplishment of the measure. The work was commenced forthwith, under the direction of captain Samuel Brown, of the royal navy, and this novel and beautiful structure was completed in the summer of 1826. The middle level is by this means united with the south, and a direct communication opened from Wisbech to Ely, by way of Upwell, which in distance saves seven miles. It may be considered not only an object of novelty and admiration, as a piece of mechanism, but as affording convenience and delight to the traveller, and will be viewed hereafter as one of the greatest improvements introduced in this district, and thus the esteemed rector of Upwell has raised a monument of usefulness and worth to the fens, that will add lustre to and perpetuate his name. It may not be uninteresting to give a short description of the

*Suspension Bridge.**

The bridge is one hundred and ninety-one feet long, and in breadth fourteen feet; the platform or road of the bridge springs two feet in the centre, and five feet six inches above the general level of the bank, with a neat iron railing, five feet high, and three feet walk on each side for foot passengers. The bridge is supported by four principal suspending chains, driven twelve feet into

* It was opened to the public on the 16th August 1826, and the day being fine, a large part of the neighbouring gentry, and a considerable concourse of persons of all descriptions, attended, the former of whom dined on board the barge belonging to the honourable corporation of the Bedford Level; and the day was passed by all classes with the utmost harmony and conviviality.

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J.H.West. del.ᵗ

Meadle sculpᵗ

BRIDGE OF SUSPENSION,

Erected at Welney, in the County of Norfolk.

Designed by Capt. S. Brown R.N.

Published by H. & J. Leach, Wisbech, 1827.

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the ground, rivetted end to end, and properly secured by coupling plates and bolts of proportional strength, with perpendicular suspenders supporting the lower bars, on which the beams of the bridge rest; the suspension rods are of different lengths, being nineteen in number on each side. The foundation of the structure consists of sixteen strong piles of timber to each of the two piers, driven twenty one feet in the solid bed of gravel. A large iron plate, fixed twelve feet in the ground, forms a sort of bed, called the anchor, through which the chains run, and to which they are fastened. The piers of the brick work are twelve feet high, and the cast iron piers twenty-one feet, making in all thirty-three feet from the foundation to the top of the pier.

This work was executed by captain Brown, the estimate whereof was £2710, which certain alterations, with a toll house, &c. extended to £3000.; but even this sum will not cover all the expenses attending a work of this magnitude.

Many coins of the Roman emperors were dug up at Welney about A.D. 1718.* Plates of these coins were engraved, and are amongst the valuables presented to Trinity college library by Beauprè Bell.

The Welney Charity

Is a noble benefaction, consisting of several pieces of ground in Upwell and Welney, given many years since by William Marshall, esq. who by indenture created certain trusts for the regulation of this excellent charity, an extract whereof now follows:

* Coles' MSS.

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A.D. 1st Apl. 1661. "By indenture of feoffment, William Marshall, of Lincoln's Inn, esq. conveyed to twelve feoffees therein named, and to their heirs, nine pieces of fen ground, lying in Upwell and Welney hamlet, in the county of Norfolk, in a place there called the Weild, and in the parish of Littleport, in the isle of Ely, containing four hundred and seventy-nine acres, by a survey made in 1818, to hold upon trust, to receive the rents and profits of the said premises, and to distribute, dispose of, and pay the same in manner following, viz.

"One-third part thereof in repairing the chapel of Welney aforesaid, and also the bridge over the river or stream thereof, for the inhabitants of the said hamlet to pass over the said bridge, to hear divine service and prayers in the chapel aforesaid.

"Another third part thereof for relieving poor widows of Welney, and for putting and binding out poor infants apprentices.

"And the other third part thereof to be employed and laid out in repairing the highways within the metes and bounds of the same hamlet, as often as occasion should require.

"And upon further trust, that when so many of the said feoffees should die, or remove, or live out of the said hamlet, so that but one of them should be left, then those four, with such feoffees as should live out of the said hamlet, should, within six months after the same should so happen, convey all their right, &c. in the said premises, unto twelve of the most substantial inhabitants who were freeholders within the same hamlet, and to their heirs and assigns for ever, in trust for such

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uses as thereinbefore declared, with a proviso that once in every year, and oftener, if occasion should require, the said feoffees, or the major part of them, should make up an account of the rents and profits of the said premises, and to what uses the same had been paid or distributed, and should cause such account to be entered in a book, and signed by the said feoffees, and openly produced at some public meeting of the parishioners of Welney aforesaid, there to be inspected and perused.

"The trusts of this original feoffment were from time to time, as the old feoffees died or quitted the hamlet of Welney, renewed by subsequent deeds, pursuant to the provision in that behalf made, down to the year 1791. Six of the feoffees named in a new feoffment deed executed in that year, having subsequently died, and the said charity estates having from improved drainages and other causes greatly increased in value, so that the rents and profits were more than sufficient to answer the particular uses and trusts contained in the original indenture of feoffment, and some parts of the rents and profits of the said charity estates remaining in the hands of the surviving feoffees,—an information was filed in the high court of Chancery in Hilary term 1805, by his majesty's attorney general, at the relation of certain inhabitants of Welney, against the then surviving feoffees, praying for an account of the money then in their hands, and that it might be referred to one of the masters of the said court, to approve of a scheme for the appropriation thereof, and of the further surplus of the rents of the said charity estates, after answering the purposes of the charity, specially directed by the indenture of 1st April 1661. Whereupon the master by his report certified, that it appeared to him, the rents and profits of

A.D. 1791. 1805.

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the said charity estates were more than sufficient for the uses mentioned in the said deed of 1st April 1661. He also certified, that the hamlet of Welney aforesaid was situate in a remote part of the great level of the fens, called Bedford Level, and that, from the state of the roads during the winter season, the communications therewith were at times very bad and difficult; and that there not being any school in the said hamlet, the children of the poor inhabitants there were entirely debarred from all means of obtaining any useful instruction, other than from divine service performed in the said chapel once every sunday; and that the habits and conduct of many of the inhabitants, for want of such instruction, being in many instances irregular and incorrect; he had, under the circumstances aforesaid, and as directed by the said decretal order, proceeded to consider, and had approved of a scheme for an appropriation of the rents and profits, viz.

"That one full third part of the net rents and profits of the said charity estates should be annually laid out and employed for relieving and sustaining poor widows of the said hamlet, and for putting and binding out poor infants of the same hamlet apprentices, and for providing them with apparel and clothing, if necessary, during their apprenticeship: that as much of the remaining two third parts of the said rents and profits as should be requisite should from time to time be employed and disposed of for repairing the chapel of Welney aforesaid, and also the bridge, over the river or stream thereof, for the inhabitants of the said hamlet to pass over the said bridge to hear divine service and prayers in the chapel aforesaid, and for keeping in repair the highways within the metes and bounds of the said hamlet:

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"That out of the residue of such rents and profits, after the payments aforesaid, a free school should be established, for the use and benefit of the children of the poor inhabitants of the said hamlet for ever, to be called "The charity school of William Marshall, founded at "Welney, in the county of Norfolk:" that the vestry room erected by the trustees of the said charity in the said hamlet, adjoining the said chapel, should be used for the purpose of the said free school: that the trustees for the time being should provide a master for the said school, and might, if necessary, and the finances of the charity should be adequate thereto, erect a proper dwelling house for the residence of the master, and purchase a piece of ground for the site thereof, out of the funds and revenues of the said charity, after making the several payments and provisions before mentioned.

"The court, having by an order confirmed the master's report, and having approved of new trustees for the future management and government of the charity, a new feoffment deed (settled and approved by the master, and dated 7th August 1819) was executed. By that deed the right reverend Bowyer Edward, lord bishop of Ely, and the bishop of Ely for the time being; Richard Greaves Townley, esq. lord of the manor of Upwell and Welney, in the county of Norfolk, and the lord of the said manor for the time being; the reverend William Gale Townley, rector of Upwell and Welney, and the rector of Upwell and Welney for the time being; William Lee, esq., Joseph Climenson, farmer, William Climenson, (son of the said Joseph Climenson) Robert Smart, farmer, James Lee, gentleman, John Palmer, gentleman, Hanslip Palmer, (son of the said John Palmer) William Rogers, A.D. 1819.

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Edward Beeton, Thomas Baker, George Cole, Robert Beart, the elder, Robert Beart, (son of the said Robert Beart, the elder) William Cox, the younger, William Beart, (son of the late William Beart) Joseph Little, and John Little, farmers, were constituted trustees, with a provision for the appointment of new trustees, (except in the instances of the bishop, the lord of the manor, and rector) from time to time, when necessary."

Under the vigilant superintendance and direction of the present feoffees, the affairs of the charity are judiciously and correctly conducted. The estates are annually let by auction, in lots, to the best bidders; the rents are required to be paid in advance immediately after the letting, by which means losses to the charity are avoided, and a due appropriation of the funds and revenues for the year readily adjusted; a treasurer is appointed, who gives security for the due execution of his office, and whose accounts are made up and regularly audited at a yearly meeting, held in the month of June, and at which meeting such rules, orders, and directions for the good order and government of the charity, as the trustees or a major part of them present think expedient, are from time to time made.

The inhabitants of the low country are chiefly dependant for water on such as is obtained by the convenience of cisterns, and what is afforded from the soakage of the earth, which is by no means of a bad quality.

The reverend Gale Townley, amongst other public and useful designs, is at this time engaged in boring for

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water at Welney, at his private expense, in hopes of procuring a good supply at all times of that necessary article of life, for the benefit of the surrounding neighbourhood.

By the population returns in 1821, there were one hundred and sixty-one males, and one hundred and fifty-one females, making together three hundred and twelve in the hamlet of Welney.

THORNEY,

ANCIENTLY denominated Ankar-ig, or Ankeridge, the former from the Saxon words meaning "Thorney "Island," the latter from the Anchorites or hermits who dwelt in the cells of an abbey founded there by Saxulph, first abbot of Peterborough, in the time of St. Etheldreda, A.D. 662.

This monastery was destroyed by the Danes in 870, and rebuilt in the reign of king Edgar in 972, for Benedictine monks. In 1085, the church was rebuilt by abbot Gunter, temp. William I.; and in 1178, was dedicated to the Virgin and St. Botolph,* by Hervey, first bishop of Ely. The structure possessed considerable magnificence, and was at least five times as large as at present.† When the abbey was dissolved by king Henry VIII., great part of the building was destroyed. It consisted of two tiers of semicircular arches, resting

* Who, with many other Saxon saints, lies buried in this church. *Coles' MSS.*

† A draught of Thorney abbey is in the library of the reverend doctor Johnson, of Spalding. It had a tower in the middle, with a cross embattled at top. *Coles' MSS.*

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on massy pillars. The remainder escaped destruction by being made parochial. The side aisles were removed in 1636, the nave (which is all that is left of the old church, and constitutes the whole of the present one, being sixty-six feet in length, and twenty-eight in breadth) has been repaired and fitted up for the performance of divine service. It is a neat pile of building, with two small turrets at the west end, elegantly adorned with a row of nine statues of saints. On each side of the arches of the west door is written "1636," and within the church are several mural monuments. A small building, once part of the cloisters, is now converted into a school house, the master of which is allowed a salary of £20. by his grace the duke of Bedford. At the time of the dissolution, the revenues of the abbey were estimated at the annual value of £411. 12*s*. 11*d*. A great part of its possessions, together with its site, were given, in the year 1549, to John lord Russel, ancestor of the duke of Bedford, who is lord of the manor, patron of the church, and sole proprietor of the parish. Not far from the church have been dug up many urns and coins,* among which were divers of Trajan, very fair and well preserved. The last abbot obtained a pension of £200. per annum, on surrendering his abbey into the king's hands. The abbot was a mitred one, and was summoned as a baron to parliament 49th Henry III.* The religious societies founded in the isle of Ely may be accounted for from the retired and solitary situation. Thorney has a respectable inn, built in a quadrangular form, with a paved yard in the centre. At the west end of the church, on the other side of the street, stands a very fine pile of buildings built out of the ruins of the

* Selden.

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abbey, occupied by Tycho Wing, esq. The inhabitants of Thorney are many of them descended from the refugee French or Walloons, a colony of whom settled here about the middle of the 17th century, having been employed by the earl of Bedford in draining the low grounds; and in Thorney, as well as the neighbouring parishes, many French names are still extant. In the church yard is a vast number of tombstones and head stones bearing French names, the following is here noticed for its singularity:

"In memory of
William Livard, alias Count,
who departed this life
July 29th 1733, aged 37.
Here lies the unaccountable Count,
Who died in his prime,
Lived most of his time,
Rest the unaccountable Count."

Bishop Wren granted a licence to Stephen de Cursal, a Frenchman, to preach at Thorney in French or Latin, in the year 1640; but the epitaph of the reverend Ezekiel Danois, who died in 1674, speaks of the latter as the first minister of the French colony.

The living is a donative, exempt from the bishop's and archdeacon's visitation, nor are confirmations held there. Divine service used to be performed in the church of Thorney in the English language on one part of the Lord's day, and on the other in the French, to the protestant refugees; but now, the inhabitants being in a manner naturalized, have forgotten their original tongue, and speak English. A French register of baptisms from the year 1653 to 1727 is still preserved. The marriage ceremony

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was performed by the English clergymen. The parish is exempt from tithe, and the minister is allowed £200. per annum. The office of steward to the noble duke's property has been filled for nearly seventy years past by the very respectable family of Wing.* Thorney has a market on Thursdays, granted to the earl of Bedford by charter of the Bedford Level in 1638, with a large fair for horses on the 1st July. The parish contains about 17,560 acres. The farms are from 200 to 500 acres, and the rental about £20,000. per annum. The noble duke pays 1*s.* 6*d.* per acre drainage tax for external works, and the tenants 1*s.* 6*d.* per acre for internal. The last breach of the bank of Morton's Leam, which was in the month of November 1770,† did much injury in this parish. About 25,000 sheep are sent from this place to Smithfield annually. The late incumbent was the Rev. John Girdlestone: the name of this family is met with in old records, and in the History of Norfolk, variously spelt, as Kerdeston, Kirdistone, Kerdlestone, Cardestone, Cardleston, and Girdlestone. The name of Kerdeston may be met with in Norfolk from the time of the conquest, and probably originated from a village of that name, where they possessed some property, as we find in 15th Edward I. (1286) the name of Kerdleston cum Reepham. Sir William de Calthorpe, and Eliza, his wife, had land conveyed to them by William de Kerdeston at that time. This family, for a long period, lived in high respectability in Norfolk; and in the chancel of Reepham church is to be seen a marble monument of Sir William de Kerdeston. After several generations, the Rev. Zurishaddai Girdlestone succeeded by will to divers estates, manors, and advowsons in Norfolk. John

* See page 60. † See page 64.

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Girdlestone, the father of Zurishaddai, married in 1707 Sarah Ford, from whom descended the late Rev. John Girdlestone, who married Rebecca, youngest daughter of Mr. Thomas Steed, and was curate and incumbent of Thorney for upwards of fifty years, and died 2d March 1821, aged 76. The family of Girdlestone has a claim to be admitted to Winchester college, as founder's kin to William of Wyckham, from whom they are lineally descended. The situation of Thorney is pleasant, the church and town standing on a rising ground, well wooded to the south west, having a mile of road towards Whittlesea overshaded by branches of trees, which, by forming an arch of boughs, give a pleasing appearance to a stranger, on the approach to Whittlesea.* William of Malmesbury, who lived in the time of Henry II., speaks with great enthusiasm of the beautiful situation of Thorney, and the extreme fertility of the soil, as abounding with orchards and vineyards,† from which testimony it must be inferred that this skirt of the level was not then drowned, and therefore, that the outfalls to the sea were at this time clear and open.

* John Girdlestone, esq. together with Steed Girdlestone, whose name has been frequently before mentioned, (see page 106) are the sons of the late reverend John Girdlestone; to the former of these gentlemen the compiler of this work is indebted for much information relative to the town of Thorney.

† Dugdale having referred to the monasteries of Ely, Ramsey, and Crowland, quotes the words of William of Malmesbury, relative to Thorney, as follows: "Thorneia, ulterior scripto, et contractior spacio, sed prior laudum "titulo, paradisi simulactrum, quod amœnitate jam cœlos ipsos imaginetur; in "ipsis paludibus, arborum ferax, quæ enodi proceritate luctantur ad sydera, "aqueæ planities herbarum viridantibus comis oculos advocat," &c. Thorney, though last mentioned, and less in circuit, hath the priority in fame; represented a very paradise; for that in pleasure and delight it resembleth Heaven itself; the very marshes abounding with trees, whose length, without knots, do emulate the stars. The plain there is as level as the sea, which, with the flourishing of the grass, allures the eye, &c. *Dugdale*, p. 360.

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Great devastation must, in an after period, have taken place, though the time when the obstructions happened to the outfall cannot now be ascertained; but what these fens were for depth and breadth during the space of many ages before the general drainage, it is no hard matter to guess, for the moor,* totally contracted by a long stagnation of the fresh waters, was found for the most part ten feet deep throughout all this side of the country.† Now, however, the eye of the beholder is again allured by the pleasing appearance of rich and verdant meads—An alteration effected by the improved drainage, at the expense of the family of the noble duke who now possesses this property, so that we may say with the poet

"Much has been performed to check the force
"Of nature's rigour. This wide expanse was erst
"A dreary, pathless waste—
"'Till one of that high honoured patriot name,
"Russel! arose, who drained the rushy fen,
"Confin'd the waters, bade groves and gardens bloom,
"And through his new creation led the streams.
"Godlike beneficence! From chaos drear
"To raise the garden and the shady grove.
"What changes cannot toil
"With patient art effect?"

Dyer's Fleece, book 2.

A cross‡ formerly stood in the parish of Thorney, near to Farcet King's Delph. Thorney grounds contain 15,850 acres,§ 400 acres whereof are in hard land, and in fen 15,450 acres; there are 4000 acres of adventurers' lands.

The population, by the last returns in 1821, was 999 males, and 971 females, making together 1970.

* Moor is matted vegetables. † Dugdale, page 360. ‡ See page 139.
§ Dugdale, page 382.

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WHITTLESEA,

Called in doomsday book Witesie, is in the hundred of Witchford and deanery of Ely, lying on the borders of Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire, about six miles east of Peterborough. It contains two parishes, Saint Mary's and Saint Andrew's, but their respective boundaries cannot be wholly ascertained. They are in distinct patronage. There are two churches, that of St. Mary's is a very handsome structure, with a beautiful spire placed on a noble square tower, adorned with fine curious work, after the cathedral fashion. The tower is lofty, and has five bells and chimes in it, and the spire of stone is exceedingly taper and elevated. The interior of the church by no means answers to the magnificence of its tower and spire, which is by far the most elegant of the kind in this part of the country. It has a nave, chancel, two side aisles, two chapels in them, and a south porch, with a chamber over it, all leaded and in good repair. About the middle aisle of the church is a marble, with an inscription to the memory of Elizabeth Whetstone, who died in 1707. This stone the people have a notion covered the bodies of two maiden sisters, who built this church. Mr. Whetstone, it seems, had this stone turned, and the present inscription put on it. It is said to have had two figures on the other side, but probably this is an idle conceit.* Only one register of baptisms &c. was kept for both parishes previous to the year 1813, if the period from 1652 to 1696 be excepted. The church is a vicarage, but anciently belonged to the abbey of Thorney, valued in the king's books at £19. 13*s.* 9*d.*

* Coles' MSS.

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Robert Bligh, last abbot of Thorney, and bishop of Down and Connor, in Ireland, by his will dated 19th October 1547, appointed his body to be buried in this church, before the sacred sacrament of the altar, and gives a legacy to the parsonage of Whittlesea, formerly belonging to the dissolved monastery of Thorney. It is presumed he lies buried in the church. The altar is on three large steps, railed round; several stones lie under the altar, but most of them defaced. There are memorials of the families of Hake, Underwood, and Moore. The church is crowded by galleries around it, which spoil the appearance. The old church yard is full of gravestones, but an additional piece of ground was purchased and consecrated in the year 1813.

The church of St. Andrew is a very handsome, neat building, adorned by a small square tower. It was given to the monks of Ely by Nigellus, bishop of that see, in 1133. In it are memorials of the families of Stona, Moore, Ground, Read, (who was high sheriff of the county in 1672) and Underwood. The latter family had lived at Whittlesea many years before the civil war, at which time Hugh Underwood, esq. was deputy lieutenant of the isle of Ely, and was then called governor of Whittlesea. His residence is supposed to have been on the spot where there is at present a pleasant and commodious plantation called the mount, and here it is said, that in cutting certain moats, swathes of mown grass were found lying perfect, and not decomposed.* The manor of Whittlesea St. Andrew, which had belonged to the prior and convent of Ely, and the impropriation of the parish of St. Mary, together with the patronage

* Coles' MSS. (See also page 19.)

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of that benefice, have long been held with the manor of Whittlesea St. Mary. The living is rated in the king's books at £4. 13*s.* 4*d.* The manor of Whittlesea St. Mary belonged to the abbot and convent of Thorney, as well as the advowson of the church. This estate has been for a considerable time in the Waldegrave family, and is now vested in the earl of Waldegrave, and the families of the duke of Grafton, and the late lord Hugh Seymour, both of whom married sisters of the late countess Waldegrave. Mr. Secretary Thurloe* was heretofore possessed of the manors of Whittlesea St. Mary, and Whittlesea St. Andrew, and that of the rectory of Whittlesea St. Mary. Whittlesea had formerly a market, which had not been wholly disused until within about the last fifty years. There is a market cross remaining; the market day was Friday. A small fair is held there for horses on the 13th June. The king presents to the vicarage of St. Andrew; the owners of the impropriate rectory of Whittlesea St. Mary present to the vicarage of St. Mary. By pope Nicholas' taxation† they are charged as follows:

	£.	*s.*	*d.*
Ecclia de Wytles Bte Marie.....	16	0	0
Vicar ejusdem	6	13	4
Ecclia sci Andree de Wytles	10	0	0
Vicar sci Andree de Witlese.....	3	6	8

The town stands on rising ground at the extremity of the isle of Ely and county of Cambridge. It is populous, and reckons about one hundred and sixty votes for members of parliament.

* Thurloe's State Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

† See page 246.

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There is a charity school for instructing fifteen poor boys or girls; the master's salary is £15. per annum, which sum was bequeathed by Mr. Kelfull, about the year 1735.

Whittlesea, exclusive of the town, contains two hamlets, called Coats and Eastrea; at the latter place, a licence, dated 1403, was granted for founding a chapel of the holy trinity. At a place called Elderneil, a chapel was consecrated in 1525,* which has been long since dilapidated. In 1509, a lease was granted to Anthony Cave, of various things, and amongst them a tenement called Eldernayla, with a croft and pool yard, at the rent of forty shillings per annum.† There was another chapel called St. Peter's, to the west of the town, in a place still called Church Field. In 34th Edward I. a presentment was made of the tenants wasting the fen, and destroying the harbour for the king's deer; and that John le Wode, with the men of Whittlesea, came into the said fen, and set fire therein, which burnt in length and breadth four miles, causing thereby great loss to the king in his harts, hinds, and goats.‡ At a session of sewers at Huntingdon in 1617, it was decreed that certain drains should be cleansed by the lord of the cokenary of Whittlesea, or the farmer thereof.§ In 1728, a bill was brought into parliament, on petition of the land owners and proprietors of the low grounds and fen grounds in Whittlesea, consisting of 7000 acres of land, which the proprietors complained had been so drowned with water, that they yielded little or no profit, and could not be drained for want of convenient outfalls

* Coles' MSS. † Ibid. ‡ See page 15.
§ Dugdale, page 397.

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to discharge the waters into the common river, and from thence to sea.* About 1742, several Roman lamps were found by a man as he was ploughing at Glassmore, (a district belonging to Whittlesea); they were made of of red ware, all lying very regularly in a row. Also a human scull was dug up in the town about the same period, the whole brain whereof was ossified and concreted into as hard and solid substance as the bone, retaining still its natural curdled form, the sutures, &c. remaining entire.† There are some small charities founded by persons of the names of Dow, Randall, Kelfull, and Noble. Also some lands and houses, given at various times by different benefactors in the reign of queen Elizabeth, to trustees, the rents of which are applied to charitable or any other uses, for the general good of the town. The two parishes contain about 23,500 acres, of which about two thirds are reputed to be in the parish of St. Mary, and about one third in that of St. Andrew. Both vicarages have been held by the same person as far back as any records shew, to the year 1815. In this township are 5716 acres of adventurers' lands.

The following is a list of the several vicars since the year 1600.

A.D.
1615 Francis Gates occurs,
1639 William Mason,
1663 Richard Mason, (son of the former vicar)
1683 Richard Mason, (son of the last vicar)
1703 Thomas Topping,
1742 William Beale,

* Coles' MSS. † Nicholls' Anecdotes, vol. vi. page 139.

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A.D.
1772 Thomas Charles Cadwallader Moore,
1815 James Tobias Cook, A.M. (of St. Andrew's)
1816 John Pratt, (of St. Mary's)

William of Whittlesea, archbishop of Canterbury in 1368, was born at this place.

According to the last returns of population in 1821, it appears there were 2613 males and 2643 females, making together 5276.

Whittlesea Mere,

The most spacious fresh water lake in the southern part of Great Britain, on which have been exhibited several regattas and ice-boat sailings, is about six miles from the town of Whittlesea, situated at the extremity of the county of Cambridge, and on the north side of the county of Huntingdon, and about thirty-eight miles west of the German ocean, six miles down the Nene from the city of Peterborough, and two miles and three quarters east from Stilton. The surface is 1570 square acres. Its circumference is eight miles and three quarters, abounding with a great variety of water fowl, and the following species of fish, viz. pike, perch, carp, tench, eels, bream, chub, roach, dace, gudgeons, shallows, &c. In the summer months this lake is visited by many of the nobility and gentry from various parts. At times it is violently agitated, without any visible cause, and is fed by the waters of a vast tract of country, whose overplus makes its way down to the sea. The difficulties are too great to deduce the origin of this beautiful and extensive piece of water, and at best it would be enveloped in

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conjecture and obscurity, so as not to give satisfaction to the generality of readers; but its antiquity and importance are visible by the authorities of domesday book, and by its having, so early as A.D. 664, been granted by Wolphere, king of Mercia,* to his new founded monastery of Medehamstead, (now Peterborough) which was destroyed by the Danes in 870, when it reverted to the crown.

Domesday book mentions that the abbot of Ramsey had one boatsgate in his own right, and a second boatsgate which he held of the abbot of Thorney, with two fisheries, and one virgate of land. The abbot of Thorney had two boatsgates.

In 1507, Henry VII. granted the office of keeper of the swanery on the mere to David Cecil, for the term of seven years.

In 1662, Charles II. granted to Edward, earl of Sandwich, the office of master of the swans within the whole kingdom, and also the office of bailiff or keeper of Whittlesea Mere. The lord of the manor has a right to summon the fishermen, (or fenny ferries) to his two courts, holden at Holme, when presentments are made, and his bailiff proves the nets with a brazen mash pin, and on being found undersized, he is at liberty to take a fine, or destroy them, and is entitled to fines and forfeitures, with other manorial rights, &c.

The present rights of fishing are as follows:

* See page 113.

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William Wells, esq. lord of Glatton, with Holme, eleven boatsgates,
Lord Brownlow, lord of Farcett, one, and a private fishery,
The church of Peterborough, two,
Lord Carysfort, one.

There are other small meres in the neighbourhood, as Ugg Mere, Ramsey Mere, &c.

Mr. Golborn, in the year 1777, went through Whittlesea Mere, sounded it, and found the bottom in general very even, with four feet and an half of water, and two feet of mud under it.

About two miles distant from the north east side of the mere, there is a memorable channel cut through the body of the fen, extending itself from near Ramsey to Peterborough, and is called King's Delph. The common tradition is, that king Canute or his queen, being in some peril in their passage from Ramsey to Peterborough, by reason of the boisterousness of the waves upon Whittlesea Mere, caused this ditch to be first made, but this testimony does not reconcile itself with an occurrence mentioned three score years before, which is that of king Edgar confirming to the monks of Peterborough the fourth part of Whittlesea Mere, with all the waters, fishings, &c. thereto belonging, bounding it to the north side, where the Mere Lode enters from the river Nene, eastward to King's Delph.*

* Dugdale, page 363.

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Bevill's Leam from Whittlesea Mere to Guyhirn, about sixteen miles in length, was made by Francis, earl of Bedford, in or about 1634. This river was forty feet wide. Vermuyden's Drain leads from Whittlesea to Ramsey, and is sixteen feet wide. Whittlesea Dyke begins a little above Horsey bridge, and runs through the town of Whittlesea into the Nene below Benwick.

CHATTERIS,

Called in domesday book Cetriz and Cateriz, is a populous town, twelve miles from Ely. Alwena,* sister of Ednothus, first abbot of Ramsey, niece to king Edgar, established at this place a convent of Benedictine monks, under the government of an abbess. In the reign of Henry I., the nunnery was annexed, at the instance of Harvey, first bishop of Ely, to the church of Ely, which being suppressed in 1551, the abbey estate, with the rectory and advowson of the vicarage, was granted to Edward, lord Clinton: through him it passed into many hands, until what remained of the original grant was purchased by Robert Fawcet, esq. a solicitor of London, who occasionally resided in the abbey house, and in 1772, gave the presentation of the vicarage to the Rev. W. Holden, A.M. of Cambridge, and at his death bequeathed his right in the estate to Mr. John Seymour, who sold the advowson, and left the remaining property, consisting of the manor of Chatteris Nuns, to his son, and through him, to his grandson, the Rev. T. C. W. Seymour. The advowson of the vicarage was afterwards purchased by

* Chateries, or Chcaterizh, is not far from Ely westward, where Alwena, a woman, founded a nunnery upon a copped ground, encompassed with fens, while her husband founded Ramsey. *Camden*, page 111.

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Robert Chatfield, esq. of Croydon, Surrey, whose son, the Rev. Robert Chatfield, LL.D. is the present patron and incumbent. The rectory was sold to Charles Cholmondeley, esq. of Knutsford, in Cheshire.

The nunnery escaped ruin in the general devastation of religious houses in 1536, and was, with thirty others, reprieved for two years only, when, in 1538, it was totally suppressed. The reason probably of these few being exempted from the general fate for this term might be the regularity of their behaviour.* Chatteris has no ancient remains, except the site of the old nunnery, where a few old arches and buttresses shew, amidst the patched and modern workmanship, the labour of remote antiquity. There are also, about a mile from the town, the vestiges of a moat and walls, which formerly belonged to one of the manor houses. The parish was formerly divided by a river called the Old West Water, which ran in the direction from Earith,† through a part of Somersham parish, to the present turnpike called the Ferry, and then on the west side of Chatteris parish, to Benwick, where it joined a part of the Nene; a branch from it, anciently called Wimblington Leam, (now the Twenty-feet) divided the parish into two unequal parts, running through a part of the town, and after proceeding by the hard lands of Doddington and Wimblington, fell into the Nene at March. What remains of the Twenty-feet is now carried by the mills into Vermuyden's Drain. This river, formerly called the West Water, has, since drains have been made in other directions, now become dry land. At a place called

* Barnett's History of the Reformation. *Coles' MSS.*

† See page 21.

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Huny or Honey Hill, in Chatteris, were some subterraneous remains of ancient buildings, supposed to be those of a chapel, which had contained the bones of Huna,* chaplain of Etheldreda, the foundress of the monastery at Ely. According to tradition, Huna retired to a cell or hermitage, which was afterwards called by his name, where he died and was buried.† The body of Huna was afterwards translated to the church of Thorney. The church of Chatteris is dedicated to St. Peter, and the town continues to this day to commemorate their favourite saint by an annual feast, on the anniversary of the 20th of June. Nigellus, bishop of Ely, from 1132 to 1174, first appropriated the church of Chatteris to the nuns of Chatteris, which was confirmed by the prior and convent of Ely, and in pope Nicholas' taxation it appears the nunnery had considerable property in the parish. The church was endowed and built by the nuns. It is handsome, and consists of a square tower at the west end, in which hang five bells, on it a small spire of lead, a nave, two side aisles, and south porch leaded, and a chancel tiled: it was valued in the king's books at £ 10. In the church are several marbles to the memory of the family of Holman, and as you enter the chancel, lies a black marble, with this inscription: "Johannis "Caryll, armiger, obiit 2d die Feb. A.D. 1669, æt. 45." at the east end of the north aisle is another monument to Richard Parlett Reade, esq. high sheriff of Cambridge

* See page 90.

† Honey farm contains about 350 acres, and formerly belonged to the abbey of Ramsey, and after its dissolution, remained in the hands of the crown until 36th Henry VIII., when he granted it to William and John Sewster, esqrs. in fee, which, by divers mesne conveyances, is now become the property of William Dunn Gardiner, esq.

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and Huntingdon in 1699, and who died in 1704. The altar is on one step. There are two places, formerly used for holy water, in the south wall.

The manor house, an ancient mansion built on the site of the abbey, stands in the centre of the town, within the walls of the nunnery, which was for some time occupied by a respectable family of the name of Hake. Another manor,* being the largest as to its extent of jurisdiction, was, after the dissolution of monasteries, for many years in the family of Caryl, from whence it descended by female heirs to the Worsleys and Terrys. It is now the property of William Dunn Gardiner, esq. who purchased the moiety of J. C. Worsley, esq. The manor house, which stood within a moated eminence at a place called Caryl's Grove, has been pulled down, and the offices converted into a farm house.

Chatteris may vie with many places of greater celebrity in the number of valuable coins and other remains of antiquity, which have been dug up in the precincts of the town.

In 1757, several human skeletons, and the curious arms of a British warrior, an iron sword, spear and umbo of a shield, with an earthen urn and glass vase, were found

* Those only are said to be legally considered manors, which can be proved to have existed before the passing of the statute 'Quia Emptores,' 18th Edward I. A.D. 1290. This act was occasioned by the great subdivision of property about that time, and by which the number of inferior manors was so increased, that almost every little farm of ninety or one hundred acres became a manor, and held its court.

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here, in a kind of tumulus, between the ferry and Somersham, in forming the present road to the ferry, and given to Mr. Fawcet, the lord of the manor.*

Some labourers a few years ago † digging for gravel in Chatteris, at a place called Campole, about half a mile from the church, found at the depth of full ten feet from the surface, part of the skeleton of an elephant, in a fossil state, the most perfect part was the two upper grinders, these, when found, were fixed in the jaw bones, which the men broke to come at the teeth; a short piece of tusk, about three inches long, part of the scull, part of a leg bone, about fourteen inches long, with some fragments of the jaw bone, were all that were discovered; one of the grinders weighed five pounds fourteen ounces. There were found in the same place some pieces of wood quite black and spongy; various have been the conjectures as to what length of time these bones have lain here, and how they could have been buried under so great a depth of gravel.

The Romans brought elephants with their arms into England, and it is ascertained that the Roman armies overran the fenny countries long before the third century. The bed of gravel under which these bones were found must have grown or accumulated to that thickness in the sixteen centuries, which have since elapsed, so

* The site of Chatteris monastery was probably the palace of a chief among the old Britons, contiguous to which was his tomb. It was a piece of gravelly ground, pretty much elevated towards the ferry, and was probably a family burying place, for there were more bodies interred in the same spot. *Gentleman's Magazine for* 1766, page 119.

† December 1st 1819.

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that the Romans may have left this dead carcass where its remains are now found.*

In 1824, an earthen vessel, which contained about one thousand small copper coins, chiefly of Constantius, many of Constans and Constantine, and a few with the older Roman emblem of Romulus and Remus suckled by the wolf, was ploughed up near the ferry, two miles from the town, on the site of the ancient river or West Water. A very fine specimen of an elk's horn was also lately dug up in the vicinity. Between Chatteris and Ely, certain tumuli are to be seen, it has been much disputed for what these barrows were constructed, and who were the makers of them. The nations to whom they are generally attributed are the British, and with as much probability we might add the Danish, but history is silent as to the particular time of their formation. On digging through them, bones and wood both burnt to charcoal have been found.† There are three remaining

* Mr. John Girdlestone has these remains of antiquity in his possession.

† The Danish and Saxon nations did not burn their dead, the Romans certainly did, and the Britons might have borrowed the custom from them, and the Roman-British might also. Improvements having been recently made in the exercise ground at Newmarket, near the entrenchment called the "Devil's Ditch," one of those monumental remains, denominated barrows or tumuli, which are numerous in that neighbourhood, was removed, and upon clearing the earth to the centre of the mould, a discovery was made of an urn of rude construction and materials, containing ashes, together with some beads, which it is presumed formed the ornaments of the person to whose honour the barrow was dedicated. There were also found two coins, supposed to be Roman, and a fragment of a cup of far superior manufacture to the urn, lying promiscuously at the depth of about two feet. In another instance, a mound, sixty yards in length and twenty-five in breadth, shewed evident traces of its having been a funeral pile: the whole of the earth being apparently discoloured with fire, and occasionally presenting in its removal pieces of dried charcoal.

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in Chatteris, on the south of the road to Ely, in a triangular form, and are probably a memorial of some great catastrophe, of which we have no record. That many are Danish is highly probable, particularly as these barrows are seen in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, &c. There are so many purposes for which these tumuli might have been raised, and so many uses to which they might be applied, that we have no reason to ascribe them all to one age or people. Dr. Stukeley speaks of having observed several barrows or tumuli, which he supposes to have been the work of the ancient Britons; they are generally of very considerable bulk, much too large for Roman, nor had any thing Roman been discovered in opening them. About a century ago, two or three were dug quite away near Boston, and another at Frampton, in Lincolnshire, to make bricks of, or to mend the roads; these he supposes to have been the burying places of our Cimbric predecessors, purposely thrown up; the remains of their chiefs were probably carried thither, whose habitations were in the marshy grounds, and who chose to be buried upon higher ground than where they lived.* They may have been the record of some battle, or might have served as beacons for fire, as signal stations in a flat country, or as positions for troops. We may here remark, that both from Roman historians, and from what we can glean from the Saxon Chronicles, the isle of Ely, of which Chatteris was an entrance from the side of Huntingdonshire, at the ferry, where the West

* Herodotus mentions that these barrows were very frequent in Scythia, and gives a curious account of the burial of their ancient kings. These mounds are even now frequent in the route between the countries occupied by the Don-Cossacs, and the sandy track which stretches between the Don, the ancient Tanais, and the Volga.

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Water was crossed, long furnished an asylum to the routed Britons, the Saxons, and their descendants, from the fury of the Roman arms, the depredations of the Danes, and the valour of the Normans.

It appeared by a survey made under the inclosure act, which passed in the year 1809, that this parish contained 13,454A. 2R. 5P.

By the population returns of 1821, there were 1604 males, and 1679 females; total 3283.

There is no endowed school, or money left for the purpose of education of the poor; but within these eight years a national school has been built, principally through the beneficence of the esteemed vicar, aided by voluntary contributions. It is at present in a very prosperous state, affording instruction to three hundred children.

The only public benefaction consists of certain pieces of land, which, since the inclosure act, are let at about £70. per annum, which sum is distributed at Easter every year amongst the poor of the place. The original deed of gift being lost, an application was made to the court of Chancery a few years since, when an appropriation was decreed, and eleven trustees appointed to manage and let the estate. The survivors of this number of trustees meet on every Easter Monday, and examine the accounts of the receiver or officers, and pay over the balance to the overseers of the poor for the purpose above named. A court leet under the bishop of Ely is held on St. Matthew's day, when the constables are appointed and nuisances presented. Several acres of land are

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appropriated by ancient usage for the purposes of this court. The bishop appoints the steward, and is lord of the manor here called Ely Barton.*

The following vicars appear on record:

A.D.		A.D.	
1632	George Carter.	1691	Thomas Rawling.
1637	George Otway.	1701	William Torkington.
1663	William Dearsley.	1737	John Muriel.
1665	Francis Goldwell.	1749	Andrew Layton.
1666	William Strong.	1772	William Holden, A.M.
1687	John Salter.	1803	Robert Chatfield, LL.D.

DODDINGTON,

In the deanery of Ely, and about sixteen miles from thence, is a parish of very great extent. This is the mother church to March, Benwick, and Wimblington, though much inferior to the chapel of March, her daughter, in point of building and beauty. The church, dedicated to the blessed Virgin Mary, is neat and in good condition, with a tower, on which is placed a spire of stone, and in the tower five bells. It has a nave, with two side aisles,

* The compiler is indebted to the Rev. Dr. Chatfield for much valuable information respecting this parish. The doctor is well known as the author of the Historical View of Hindostan, a work of considerable merit; he is also a most zealous advocate in the cause of the Greeks, in their present arduous struggle for freedom, and has made several appeals to the public in the behalf of the warriors of that deeply injured and classic land, against their ruthless enemies: but above all, he is eminent as a parish priest, in the faithful discharge of Christian and relative duties, whose character may be comprised in a few words, as a man of sound virtue and humility, with an union of talents, zeal, and consistency of conduct, at all times to be depended on. This is no panegyric, but a tribute of respect, which all who know the worthy doctor will freely acknowledge, though the compiler feels sensible, whilst he makes this slight remark, he is running the risk of incurring his displeasure.

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and a chancel almost as big as the nave, tiled, and handsomely roofed with wainscot, and the whole church and chancel well and neatly paved with freestone. It is a rectory, valued in the king's books at £22. 4s. 11½d. The altar stands on two steps, and is railed round. On a grey marble slab on the north side, within the rails, is an inscription to a late rector, the reverend Philip Williams, who left a benefaction of £50. to buy books for the poor of March. Exactly before the door, and on the steps in the middle aisle, lies a beautiful white marble slab, with this inscription:

"En lector! hic ad pedes tuos inter pios majorum "cineres Dni Sewsteri Baronetti."*

Over the north door, at the foot of the steps, hangs the achievement of Sir Sewster. In the middle chancel is a black marble slab, with the following inscription:

"Here lies the body of Mr. Thomas Waddington, "who departed this life July 19th 1722, æt 62."

Also three plain marble slabs to the memory of three of the children of the reverend Algernon Peyton, the present rector.

There are stalls round the chancel, which is separated from the nave by a screen, over which are the king's arms, the ten commandments, with the Lord's prayer, and creed. In 1595, Dr. Clayton was rated for his parsonage at Doddington, to raise one light horse, furnished.†

* See Engraving of Sir Sewster Peyton. † Coles' MSS.

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John Nalson, the historian, who married Alice, the daughter of Dr. Algernon Peyton, was rector of this parish in 1668. The rectory is remarkable, as being one of the richest in England. The parish is the largest in the isle and county, as well as one of the most extensive in the kingdom, containing 38,000 acres of rich land, subject to tithe.

The presentation of this valuable preferment is in the gift of Sir Henry Peyton, being his private property. The living was originally vested in the bishoprick of Ely, but queen Elizabeth, by the act before mentioned, passed in the first year of her reign,* took the same into her hands, with the manor of Doddington, upon the demise of the then bishop, and by letters patent, in the 44th year of her reign, (1601) granted the manor, with all the rents, &c. the little and great park in Doddington, all courts leet, franchises, &c. together with the advowson to the right and patronage of the church of Doddington, to Sir John Peyton, the elder, knight, governor of Jersey and Guernsey, and Sir John Peyton, the younger, knight, and their heirs and assigns, in consideration of £3000. paid by them, and of a fee farm rent of £74. 6*s.* 8*d.* For a century before this period, the family of the Peytons appeared to have been settled at Doddington as lessees to the bishop of Ely. This manor has a court leet and court baron, and in 1613, the lords of the manor consented to an amicable decree, whereupon the fines, which had been before accustomed to be arbitrary, were made certain, and have so continued ever since.

* See page 114.

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The reverend doctor Algernon Peyton, the son of Sir John Peyton, the younger, was lord of the manor in 1654, and also rector of the parish for twenty-six years, since which time the living has not been in the possession of any of the family of Peyton until it was held in 1805, for the present incumbent, by his uncle, who is since dead. The present incumbent, the reverend Algernon Peyton, has now enjoyed it for sixteen years.

The presentation to this living was, in the year 1750, sold by Sir Thomas Peyton, who had no issue, for £ 1000. to the reverend doctor Proby, dean of Litchfield, and brother to the right honourable lord Carysfort, who held it for fifty-five years.

Whilst the bishops of Ely held this manor, they had a seat or palace at Doddington, and bishop Balsham died there in 1286. Bishop Cox and his family also resided here in the latter part of his time, about 1580. The last account of the manor house was in 1660, in which year it appears that colonel John Fisher, of Wisbech, died there; but it has been altogether so long forsaken by the family of Peyton as a residence, that it is not now even recollected at what period the seat was pulled down. A clump of trees, and an old moat of considerable extent, mark the site, and what remains of the mansion is now fitted up as a farm house.

The following rectors are on record:

A.D.

1600 Samuel Wright.

1641 Algernon Peyton, D.D. who died in 1667, having added much to the convenience of the parsonage-house.

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A.D.
1667 John Nalson, LL.D.
1685 Philip Williams.
1719 Vyner Snell.
1750 Baptist Proby, D.D.
1805 The Rev. James Dashwood.
1811 The Rev. Algernon Peyton, M.A.

Benefactions.

Lionel Walden, esq. in the year 1719, gave £500. in money, for the purpose of building a free school at Doddington, the place of his nativity, for the education of so many poor children as his trustees should think fit. The benefaction remained many years unappropriated, so that it accumulated to £1800. 3 per cents., and £500. 4 per cents. A school has been recently established, a school-house built, and a master appointed, with a salary of £40. per annum.

Mr. Thomas Waddington, in 1722, gave a piece of land, then valued at £2. per annum; the rent to be applied towards the instruction of the poor children of Doddington.

The Rev. Dr. Jobson, of Wisbech, gave £100., the interest thereof to be employed in providing religious books for the poor. A.D. 1816.

In 1821, some copper coins of the emperors Decentius and Constantius were found in this parish.

The population of Doddington in 1821 was 339 males, 337 females, total 676; Benwick, 264 males, 250 females, total 514; making together 1190. In 1676, the population of Doddington-cum-Benwick was 813.

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MARCH

Is a large hamlet belonging to the parish of Doddington, containing a population of nearly 4000 inhabitants, situate eleven miles from Wisbech. A considerable inland trade is carried on here in coals, timber, and corn, by means of the river Nene, which passes through the hamlet. In 1671, a grant was made by king Charles II. to Sir Algernon Peyton, bart., his heirs and assigns, to hold two marts or fairs, the one on Monday before Whitsuntide, and the other on the third Tuesday in October, with a court of Pie Powder;* the tolls and profits whereof were to be received by Sir Algernon and his heirs; and also a market on every Friday.†

The manor, which now forms part of Sir Henry Peyton's estate, was given to the monks at Ely by Oswi, and Leoflede, daughter of Brithnod.‡

The church or chapel is a noble and beautiful Gothic structure, with a grand tower at the west end, on which is a lofty and fine spire of stone, with five bells; a spacious nave and two side aisles, the south, as well as north porch, leaded. The chapel is dedicated to St. Wendreda, and was built about the year 1343, as is

* Pie Powder is a court incident to fairs and markets, to be held only during the time the fair is kept, to administer justice to buyers and sellers, and for redress of disorders committed in them: so called because they are most usual in summer, when the suitors to the court have dusty feet, and from the expedition in hearing cases proper thereunto, before the dust goes off the feet of the plaintiff and defendant. *Jacobs' Law Dictionary.*

† The town of Wisbech seems to have entertained some jealousy of this grant and privilege, as it appears by the records of the corporation, that they directed the town-bailiff to take certain proceedings to prevent March being made a market town.

‡ See page 116.

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shewn by a grant of indulgence, still preserved among the archives of the parish, to all those who should frequent this chapel, or have any other affairs relating to the same; dated at Avignon, August 14th 1343, in 2d year of the pontificate of pope Clement VI. during the time of Simon Montacute, bishop of Ely. The chancel is tiled, and seems to have been more recently added, not being of equal grandeur with the rest of the building. At the east end of the north aisle is a neat stone turret for a bell. Under the battlements on both sides of the church, the flint work in the freestone represents various grotesque figures. Beneath the belfry is a large arch to walk through. Notwithstanding so fine a building, it is only a chapel, as before observed, to the rectory of Doddington, about four miles distant from it. The altar stands on an elevation of three steps, railed round: the altar-piece is handsomely painted, gilt, and adorned, having festoons of fruit and flowers, with urns at the top, and in front the ten commandments, the Lord's prayer, and the creed. In the chancel are several stones and marbles: at the foot of the steps is one to Mary Marshall, who died in 1683; a handsome slab to Ann, daughter of Joseph Herrenden, esq. of Morcot, in the county of Rutland, the affectionate wife of Abraham Jobson, who died 27th January 1790, aged 52.* Also another to W. Walsham, esq. who died in 1732; with several others to the same family. Also a mural monument to Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Shepheard, and a recent one to Ann, the wife of Edmund Barley, who died in 1825.

At the west end is a mural monument to Thomas Harrison, esq. who died in 1699; and at the east end

* She was the first wife of the Rev. Dr. Jobson, afterwards and now vicar of Wisbech.

of the north aisle is an ancient slab, on which is a brass tablet, with the inscription, "Pray for the soule of Simon "Payne, who died in the year of our Lord 1501." Also another to Catherine, the wife of Anthony Hansard, esq. She was sister to Sir Robert Southwell, counsellor to king Henry VIII., and died in 1517. Also, in the nave or middle aisle, is an ancient tombstone to William Dredeman, who died in 1503; there are effigies of himself and wife on brass. The ornamental part of the roof is said to have been erected by him.*

In the south porch is a monument to the memory of Thomas Shepheard, esq.

The roof is of wood, with numerous projecting figures of angels, and is one of the richest specimens of the kind in Cambridgeshire.

A guild-hall, dedicated to the holy trinity, was formerly established in this town, which fell into decay at the time of the dissolution of religious houses. A building in the High Street, on the south side of the road, has from time immemorial borne the name of the "Guild-hall."

In 1730, when the road † was making from Wisbech to March, two urns were found, in one of which were

* Lyson's Cambridgeshire mentions that his name appears found marked by flints on the outside of the wall of the nave, which seems to be an error, as such letters are intended for "St. Wendreda," to whom the church is dedicated.

† 1729-30, January 14th. A petition of the gentlemen, freeholders, merchants, tradesmen, and other inhabitants of Wisbech and March, was presented to the house of commons, setting forth, that the ancient road between the two towns, particularly between March Chain and Guyhirn, (which was a way upon sufferance, and for which a toll was taken) was

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bones and ashes, and in the other, about three hundred pieces of silver coin, of all the Roman emperors from Vespasian to Constantius, both inclusive, no two pieces alike. Also, a few years since, some coins of Adrian were found in a field of Mr. Richards'; and more recently, in digging a hole for a gate-post, nearly half a peck of base silver, of about the time of Gallienus, was found at Stonea, near March.

In the year 1792, an act of parliament was obtained for inclosing the open commons of this hamlet. The house of reception for the aged and impotent poor has a handsome exterior, and stands in an airy situation on the south side of the turnpike road: it was erected in the year 1823.

On the front of that part of the White Hart inn, in March, which fronts the river, used formerly to be some

become dangerous and almost impassable, occasioned by great numbers of cattle driven, and large quantities of provision carried that way; and that a nearer and much more commodious road might be made between the towns, at a small expense, from March common to Guyhirn; and that the proprietors of lands between those places were consenting to dispose of a sufficient part thereof for that purpose, for reasonable considerations, but that it could not be done without the aid of parliament, by reason of the infancy of Joseph Dixon, one of the proprietors; and therefore they prayed for leave to bring in a bill for erecting a turnpike, and appointing a toll for making the said road, and keeping it in repair, and also all the ancient road through the town of March, and for enabling the said infant to convey his part of the said lands for that purpose. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xxi. page 400. *Coles' MSS.* vol. iii. page 30.

1729. A petition was also presented on behalf of Richard Fiennes, an infant, by Dame Alice St. Barbe, his guardian, setting forth, that he was advised that certain clauses in the intended bill were likely to take away his right to an ancient toll paid for a way, by permission, over the manor of Waldersea, the petitioner's estate, and the same was ordered to be heard by counsel. *Journals of the House of Commons.*

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square bricks of great antiquity, on which were imprinted the following letters: "HEWGARNARMGTGV "GJJ;" which first make out a person's name, viz. Hew Garnar, and the others were probably initial letters of his children's Christian names. There were also other devices, viz. a coronet and a shield. This is reported to have been the first house that ever was built in March.

A handsome avenue, consisting of double rows of elm trees, with a beautiful gravelled foot-walk, leads from the town to the church, which is nearly half a mile distant from the bridge and market-place, and in one part of this walk stands a stone cross, the time of the erection of which is not known, though it is supposed to have been built about the period of Henry VI.

The fairs are held on Monday before Whit-Sunday, on Whit-Monday, and 27th October.

By the population returns in 1821, the number of of inhabitants was 1924 males, and 1926 females, making together 3850.

In this town are several valuable charities, four of which are very important, and known by the names of Neale's Charity, Wade's, Guild-hall, and Fringe's. Neale's charity consists of thirty-three acres and a half of adventurers' land in White Fen, the rents whereof were directed to be applied to provide a schoolmaster, and were given for such purpose in the year 1696. Henry Wade, in the year 1713, gave the residue of his estate to the use of the poor, with an annual sum to be paid to a schoolmaster, and for putting out children apprentices, and buying heifers for poor housekeepers.

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The guild-hall estate consisted of a messuage, with a yard, called the Guild-hall; and Fringe's estate of twelve acres of pasture, given in the year 1575, for the benefit of the poor; since which period, several other allotments of land have been set out and added to the above gifts, by virtue of the act referred to for inclosing the open and common lands in March. A few years ago, it was thought desirable to apply to the court of Chancery, in order that the several charities might be regulated, and proper persons appointed to act as trustees for the management of the said charities and estates thereto belonging; whereupon a bill was filed, and on 4th March 1826, the master made his report as follows: That he found that the rents of the estates, exclusive of the messuage called the guild-hall, amounted in the whole to £458. 12s. per annum viz.

	£.	s.
Neale's Charity	50	0
Wade's	301	12
Guild-hall estate	87	0
Fringe's	20	0
	£458	12

And it was accordingly, by such report, directed that the above rents should be applied for the purposes of the respective charities, according to the several trusts; that the four charities should be consolidated, and the estates be held on one plan, and vested in fifteen trustees, and when reduced by death to seven, eight others to be appointed: that the trustees should meet annually on the first Monday in January, and that they should be authorized to take down that part of the guild-hall

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messuage occupied as a workhouse, and to rebuild on the site thereof a suitable building for the education of 200 boys and 150 girls, on the system of the national schools on Dr. Bell's plan, for the residence of a master and a matron, the expense of which was estimated at £1200.; and that the remaining part of the said messuage should be used as a vestry or public meeting room for the parish; and that the remainder of the estates should be let by the year, or on leases for seven years, for the most money.

The trustees of the charities, with the rector and churchwardens, are to elect a schoolmaster, to teach the Latin and English tongues and arithmetic, and likewise the schoolmistress and usher: no curate of Doddington to be elected either as schoolmaster or assistant. The salaries of the schoolmaster and usher together not to exceed £140. per annum, viz. £100. for the general schooling, and £40. for the Latin schoolmaster.

That the trustees should every year bind out two or more poor children, born in March, as apprentices to trade, to be selected from the school, and pay such premium as the trustees should think proper, not exceeding £60. per annum.

That they should pay yearly to two poor decayed housekeepers, settled inhabitants of March, not receiving parochial relief, £10. a year each during their lives.

Also, after providing for those objects, and for the repairs, expenses, outgoings, and contingencies, they should pay the surplus of the said rents and profits annually, in buying heifers or young cows, to be dis-

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tributed on Easter-Monday to and amongst such poor housekeepers of March, not receiving or having received parochial relief, if any such, who had the means of keeping a cow, could be found; but if no such to be found, then in buying and distributing in like manner, to and amongst such poor housekeepers as aforesaid, pigs, or some other useful articles, fit for their situation and circumstances, so as to approach as nearly as possible to the founder's intention. The following persons were appointed trustees:

The Rev. Algernon Peyton, and the rector of Doddington for the time being.
Thomas Orton, esq.
Nathan Gray.
Hardy Johnson, } *Churchwardens for the time being.*
John Pope, }
Charles Culledge.
Johnson Barley.
Robert Vawser.
John Ratcliffe.
John Gray.
Robert Hutchinson Lewin, esq.
George Ball.
William Pratt.
Joseph Jackson.
Thomas Grounds.

Part of the building called the guild-hall was heretofore used by the parish as a house for the poor, until it became so dilapidated, as to render it almost unwholesome for their reception, which induced the parishioners to consider of erecting a new workhouse in another situation. After various discussions, it was at length

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determined to purchase a portion of land, and to erect a workhouse thereon, and it was agreed that a sum of £3000. should be advanced out of the rates for such purpose. Application was made to Sir Henry Peyton, who consented to accommodate the parish with seventeen acres of land in an airy, dry situation, near to the town, upon the centre of which the present handsome building was erected in the year 1823. It is replete with every convenience for an establishment of this nature; a governor is appointed, who has apartments in the house, and the use and occupation of the land. That part which immediately adjoins the house is converted into garden ground, for supplying the inmates with vegetables; the remaining part is pasture and arable, being managed according to the judgment and discretion of the governor, who sets the poor to work in the cultivation of the whole of it, and thus keeps them fully employed. The governor receives the produce of the land to his own use, and is allowed 1*s.* 6*d.* each per head per week for supplying the inmates with food and necessaries; the present number is thirty-five. Much sickness formerly prevailed amongst the poor in the old confined house, but now, by the advantage of an airy situation, the poor are clean, comfortable, and healthy. The effect on the rates in this short period is found to have been very beneficial, for, notwithstanding the increasing population, the rates are considerably reduced already, and a farther reduction is expected. A portion of the principal of the £3000. borrowed is annually discharged. The building itself is an ornament to the town, and the establishment altogether is so well regulated, that the plan may be recommended for adoption in other parishes, as calculated to afford great benefit, not only in diminishing the number of the poor, but

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keeping those healthy who become its inmates, by inculcating habits of industry, for it is the governor's duty and policy to keep them fully employed, as a great portion of his advantage is derived from the proper cultivation of the lands. Mr. John Todd and his wife (who formerly kept the Griffin inn) have at this time the management of this establishment: they give every satisfaction to the parish, by their judicious arrangements; and the neatness and cleanliness in which the house is kept reflect upon them great credit.

The building upon the guild-hall estate, for the purpose of a public room for general meetings of the inhabitants, and for the schools for boys and girls, (as mentioned in the decree of the court of Chancery) has been this year erected, which, being situated in the High Street, has added further to the ornament of the town. A foot pavement of Yorkshire stone, lately laid down in the principal street, has afforded an additional convenience to the inhabitants. A general spirit of improvement seems at this time to pervade the whole population, which is principally to be attributed to the activity and perseverance of Thomas Orton, esq. a resident gentleman and magistrate, who, whilst ready himself to promote any measure calculated for the benefit of his townsmen, at the same time acknowledges and duly appreciates the assistance and co-operation he receives from them, in the furtherance of those useful public improvements. Many who visit March observe with regret a wide sewer called the Hythe, on the north side of the High Street, and are surprised that it has been allowed to have continued so long open and exposed, but at this very period a plan is in contemplation to arch the same over with brick; but

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as the whole line cannot at once be effected, it is intended to execute it by degrees, which, when accomplished, besides the removal of a dangerous object, will no doubt add to the salubrity and health of the inhabitants.

Besides the noble charities before referred to, there are several of a smaller description, as recorded on frames against the church pillars.

A.D. 1635. Mr. LEONARD CREMER, by will, gave £5. to be paid by the churchwardens to the best use of the said poor.

1674. Mr. THOMAS COWARD, by will, gave six acres of arable land in Oldfield, in Elm, to the churchwardens and overseers of March, who are, out of the produce, to buy thirty yards of woollen cloth, at 2s. a yard, to make ten coats, and three chaldrons of coals, to be by them given to the poor every St. Thomas' day. He gave the like gift to the poor of Elm, on condition that if either parish officers should fail in the due disposal of his charities, the other parish should have both gifts.

1675. Mr. BEAUCHAM WALSHAM gave three roods of land in Westfield, in March, to trustees, the rents of which are to be distributed twice a year amongst their most pious and needy poor.

Mr. THOMAS WALSHAM, by will, gave a rent charge of £2. a year, issuing out of thirty acres of land lying in Northwood Side Fen, one moiety of which is to be paid to the parson or curate of March, to preach a sermon yearly on St. Thomas' day; the other moiety is to be given to the poor in bread upon the same day.

Mr. JOHN WALSHAM gave a rent charge of £4. 10s. a year, out of seventeen acres of land called Cow-fen, in the parish of March, to the churchwardens, who are

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every year to buy four heifers, and give them to four poor men of the said town every Easter-Tuesday; and if the said rent charge be not paid, the churchwardens may enter upon the said land, and enjoy the same use for ever.

Mr. RYNOLD WALSHAM, by will, gave £5., the interest of which is appointed to be distributed amongst the poor on every Easter-day.

Mrs. SARAH WALSHAM, by will, gave £10., the interest to be paid to twelve poor widows on every St. John's day.

Mr. JAMES SHEPPARD gave three acres called Fen- A.D.
house Close, to the churchwardens, for keeping at school 1684.
three or more poor children.

Mr. STEPHEN SHEPPARD, by will, gave £10., the interest of which is to be given to the poor upon every St. Stephen's day.

Mrs. ELIZABETH SHEPPARD, by will, gave £5., the interest of which is to be distributed to ten poor widows upon every new year's day.

Mr. THOMAS SHEPPARD, by will, gave £10., the interest of which is to be given to the poor upon every new year's day.

The Rev. PHILIP WILLIAMS, rector of Doddington, 1685.
gave £50. to buy land; the rent is appointed yearly to be laid out in books, and the curate of March and the churchwardens are to distribute the same to the poor of March within the week of Easter.

Mr. MICHAEL WYLDBORE gave £10. to the church- 1737.
wardens of March, the interest of which is to be distributed to forty poor people of the said town, in bread, upon every St. Michael's day.

Mr. MARTIN PIERSON, bachelor of music, by will, gave £100. for the purchase of lands, the rent of which

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is to be distributed by the overseers of March, to eight, nine, ten, eleven, or twelve poor persons of the same parish, in twopenny loaves of good wheaten bread, upon every Sunday for ever; which donation purchased a parcel of ground called Fenhouse Close, in March.

Mr. JOHN NEALE, by will, gave £5., the interest of which is to be given to the poor upon every new year's day.

A.D. 1820. The Rev. Dr. JOBSON, vicar of Wisbech, gave £100., the interest to be employed in providing religious books for the poor.

WIMBLINGTON

Is another considerable hamlet in the parish of Doddington, and has a chapel depending thereon. A school was founded here in the year 1714, by Mr. Thomas Eaton, for the education of forty children in reading, writing, and arithmetic; it was endowed with lands of considerable value. Some litigation took place, which caused an application to the court of Chancery, who have lately appropriated the rents, and settled a scheme for the future regulation of the school. A dwelling-house has been built for the master, and an appointment has been made by the trustees. The funds are more than £50. per annum. The Rev. Dr. Jobson also lately gave £100. to this hamlet, of which he was formerly curate, to provide books, such as testaments, &c., for the use of the poor. The nunnery at Chatteris had formerly lands in this hamlet.

In the return of population made in the year 1821, there were 433 males and 426 females, in all 859.

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BENWICK

Has a chapel also depending on Doddington. At this place, that branch of the Ouse, formerly called the West Water, which ran in a northerly direction from Earith, met a part of the Nene,* and descended from hence, by Great Cross or Plant Water, to the north seas at Wisbech, whilst that outfall was perfect.† In the civil wars in the time of Stephen, the men of Ely called to their assistance the earl of Essex, whom the empress Maud had won over to her party, who laid waste the lands and population of such as were attached to the king's interest, and having spoiled Ramsey abbey, the earl placed a garrison at Benwick, where was a passage into the isle of Ely.‡

In 34th Edward I. (1305) it was presented, that the men of Benwick had destroyed a certain place in King's Delph, of the alders and rushes called Hertyngges, containing a mile in length and breadth.§

The Rev. Dr. Jobson, vicar of Wisbech, gave also £100. to this hamlet, the interest to be employed in providing religious books for the poor. In 1821, there were 264 males and 250 females, making in all 514, according to the then returns of population.

MANEA

Is a small hamlet in the middle level, not far distant from Doddington, though lying in the hundred of North Witchford. A square mound of earth stands in about the

* See page 21. † Dugdale, p. 394. ‡ Lyson's Brit. Camb. page 9.
§ Dugdale, page 366.

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middle of the village, but there is no tradition for what purpose it was raised, or any information to be traced of its origin. About this spot his majesty king Charles I. had some serious intention of building an eminent town, and to have called it Charlemont.* His majesty is said to have drawn the design himself, intending to have made a navigable stream thence to the river Ouse. It has a chapel of ease appendant to Coveney, where the clergyman resides. About the year 1753, certain pieces of land becoming forfeited, the same were re-granted by the lord of the manor, at a court there held, to eight trustees, who are empowered to apply the rents for the use of the poor; and the rents of a house and of certain other lands are directed to be paid in support of a school-master, to instruct poor children of the hamlet in reading. It consists of 657 inhabitants, viz. 342 males and 315 females.

WELCH'S-DAM

Is an extra-parochial place, consisting of a few straggling houses, at the extremity of the Forty-feet or Vermuyden's Drain, where it empties itself into the Old Bedford river. It has its own overseer, and in the population returns of 1821, there appear to have been 156 inhabitants, viz. 87 males and 69 females.

This closes the account of the villages in the isle of Ely, circumjacent to the ancient town of Wisbech, and and we may remark that they are, for the most part, well built. The pale brick and tile, manufactured in these parts, give a very neat appearance to the houses,

* See note, page 45.

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and the reed thatches of the barns and cottages are warm and durable. Most of the churches are handsome, whose tall steeples are visible at a great distance, and though the country cannot boast of rural beauty, there is an air of neatness and of greater comfort than are usually to be seen in many other agricultural districts. The prosperity of a country is not altogether displayed in its fine arts, its literature, or its accomplishments: these, indeed, are the consequences of its prosperity, but its cause is to be found in the poorer classes being in a flourishing condition, and able to earn such a competency as shall not only meet their present wants, but enable them to lay up a little share of their earnings against old age and accidents: the great thing is to make the peasantry feel as their fathers have done,—that the bread purchased by their own earnings is much sweeter than any that can be given them.

It was observed in the early part of this work, that the town of Wisbech is situated at the northern extremity of the county,* on which side it borders upon Norfolk, and the canal running on the north-east side divides Wisbech from the parish of Walsoken, which lies in the latter county. The erection of a bridge over the canal has rendered an easy communication from thence with Wisbech, and has led to the building of not less than one hundred houses, so immediately adjoining as to constitute a sort of suburb to the town; we shall therefore conclude our account of the vicinity of Wisbech with a concise description of Walsoken, and a few towns adjoining in Norfolk. These neighbouring towns lie

* See page 6.

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in that part called the country of Marshland, which contains thirty thousand acres of land, and is bounded on the east by the river Ouse, on the west by the Nene, on the north by the sea banks, and on the south by the county of Cambridge. Here are situated those tracts of common lands called Marshland smeeth, and Marshland fen, (about eight thousand acres) in the several parishes or townships of Walsoken, Emneth, before mentioned, and of West Walton, Walpole St. Peter, and Walpole St. Andrew, Terrington St. Clement and Terrington St. John, together with Tilney All Saints, Tilney St. Lawrence, Islington, and Clenchwarton; for the draining, improving, and inclosing whereof, an act of parliament was obtained in the year 1796. It has been before remarked, that the Saxons were invited to settle in these parts from the fertility of the soil,* which character it still sustains. The towns in Marshland have generally Saxons names, and the lords of many of those towns were accounted for with their fees and tenures, as held both in the time of king Edward the Confessor, and in that of the Conqueror. We shall commence with

WALSOKEN.

In this parish was a manor called Marshes, from the family of De Marisco, who held lands of the see of Ely, and which was some times called Ely manor. This lordship afterwards came to the Colviles; but the principal manor of Walsoken is called by the name of Popenhoe, and was given to the abbey of Ramsey, by Ailwin, duke of the East Angles,† and was confirmed to that house

* See page 17. † Parkyns, page 259.

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by king Edgar. On the dissolution of the abbey, it came to the crown, and was afterwards granted by king Henry VIII., in his 36th year, (1544) by the name of Popenhoe, alias Walsoken manor, with the advowson of the rectory, to Sir Thomas Wriothesley and Sir Richard Southwell, (the latter of whom was one of the king's visitors of the abbeys, &c.) who conveyed the same to Thomas Barrow, esq. and the estate passed by divers conveyances through the hands of Everard Buckworth, of Wisbech, and Thomas Oxburgh, trustees for Sir Thomas Hewar, of Emneth, to John Colvile, esq. who sold it to John Creed, esq. of Oundle, where it remained until 1762, when it came to the present worthy proprietor, William Walcot, esq. There are also two other small manors. The church is a handsome edifice, dedicated to All Saints, and has a nave, and north and south aisles, with a chancel covered with lead. At the west end is a handsome ornamented tower, with a spire of freestone. The nave of the church is divided from the aisles by seven handsome semi-circular Saxon arches on each side, ornamented with the cheveron. Over the pillars is the like number of windows, with emblems of the twelve tribes of Judah underneath. The roof is supported by carved work, decorated with figures of angels placed in the niches. A very beautiful and elegant pointed Saxon arch separates the nave from the chancel, which is about forty feet in length, over which are the royal arms. The aisles extend the whole length of the church, to the extremity of the chancel, though separated by a screen on each side, where the arch, dividing the chancel from the nave, commences; and as there were formerly several guilds in the church, it is not improbable but the chapels or chantries were held within these divisions. One of such guilds was called

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the Assumption of our Lady, another Saint Thomas, the martyr; also others dedicated to the Nativity of our Lady, the Nativity of Saint John, and of the Trinity. At the east end of the north aisle, within this division, was the chapel of our Lady; a slab to the memory of William Honyter, who by his will desires to be buried by his brethren in the chapel of our Lady, ascertains the fact, by his interment in this spot. There are two other very ancient monuments on the floor of this chapel, on one was "Orate p aia Thome Honyter qui obiit 1 mo "Apr 1505;" the other, "Orate p aia Tho Mey et "Katerine Uxor sue;"* another stone is fixed against the wall in the shape of a coffin, within an arch, which seems formerly to have been a door way, opening into the church yard, it is inscribed to Frances, the wife of Henry Hunston, who died in 1685,† and in the wall opposite is a large recess, probably used for holy water. This part of the north aisle, not being at present required for the accommodation of the parishioners in their attendance on divine service, is now used by the churchwardens as a place for laying up any heavy articles belonging to the church, and in depositing coals, &c. At the east end of the south aisle, within the screen, are two raised monumental tombs, one to the memory of John Oldman and his wife; he died in 1733, and she in 1727; the other is to Edward Wignall, who died in 1763; with three monumental stones on the floor, to the memory of the family of Edwards, of whom Thomas died in 1679, William in 1682, and Stephen in 1709;‡ and at the east end of the chapel is a table of gifts to the poor, adjoining to which is the vestry, separated therefrom by a wall.

* Parkyns. † See monuments of Wisbech church, page 262.
‡ Ibid page 261.

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The two side aisles at the east end are divided from the chancel by two elegant Saxon arches on each side, similar to those in the nave of the church, ornamented with the cheveron.

In the chancel, over the communion table, is the decalogue, with the creed and Lord's prayer, and in the centre is a painting of Moses holding a wand; within the rails is a mural monument with the following inscription:

"Near this place lye interred the bodies of John Hering, "M.A., thirty-six years rector of this parish, aged 75, "buried 2d June 1717, and of Martha, his wife, daugh- "ter of Thomas Potts, of the parish of St. Gregory's, "London, aged 44, buried 3d January 1704.

"This monument is erected in grateful memory of his "excellent parents, by their only son, Thomas, lord "archbishop of Canterbury, 1750."*

Without the rails of the chancel, on the pavement, is a slab to the memory of Dorothy Wright, who died in 1691, and whose daughter married John Twells, esq.† who died in 1691. Also of John Wakefield, who died in 1777; besides which are four other slabs, so defaced as to set any decyphering at defiance.

In the north aisle is a mural monument to Ann, wife of Henry Ferrour,‡ who died in 1692. In the middle aisle are several ancient slabs, having formerly had brass effigies, now disrobed, and the inscriptions obliterated. More recent ones record the memory of Peter Wensley, son of Robert Wensley, clerk, who died in 1711; and

* See Biography, page 431. † See page 268. ‡ See page 262.

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another of Thomas, son of Edward Southwell, who died in 1692, and intermarried with a Wensley; another to Elinor Juett, who died in 1715, and James Welch, in 1766. In the south aisle is interred Elizabeth, daughter of William Scales, who died in 1694; likewise Esther and William Pratt. The font is curiously ornamented with imagery work of many saints, our Saviour's passion, and the seven sacraments of the church of Rome; round the foot of it, "Remember the soul of S. Honyter, "and Margaret, his wife, and John Beforth Chaplin."* Against the wall of the steeple, within-side, is the effigy of king Solomon, sitting on a chair or throne, in royal robes, projecting from the wall, and on each side of him a large piece of painting, representing the history and judgment of that king on the two harlots, and underneath, that of king David with his harp. A gallery for singers has also been erected at the west end.

In the church yard is a handsome monumental stone, on the south side, to the memory of Elizabeth, wife of the Rev. Thomas Sheepshanks, M.A.† and last surviving daughter of John and Judith Garland; she died in childbed 20th April 1782, leaving an only daughter.‡ There are other grave stones to the memory of the Wensleys, and one to Thomas, son of Edward Southwell, grandson to Robert Wensley, who died in 1692.

A stone cross also stands on the south side of the church yard, having three steps. It was not unusual formerly to set up crosses in places where bodies were buried.

* Parkyns. † See page 370.

‡ Now the wife of Thomas Wilkins, esq. of Ringstead House, Thrapston, Northamptonshire.

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There was formerly a chapel, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, standing at a place called the Staythe, or Stave Dyke, in which was a guild, with a custos or master. Several of the popes granted to the brothers and sisters of this fraternity, and to all who were benefactors to it, surprising indulgences. On 3d October 1491, an indulgence of forty days was granted to the believers of the hospital of the Holy Trinity of Walsoken, which was again renewed in the following year. On its dissolution, king Edward VI. granted it to Mary, duchess of Richmond and Somerset. Soon after this, Robert Balam * held it, from whom it came to Charles Balam, who died seized of it in 1591, leaving Robert, his son and heir, aged twelve. The site of this chapel is well known, lying about three quarters of a mile in an eastern direction from the church, near what is called the Gull.

There is no endowed school in the parish. Benefactions have been from time to time left in land and money, to the amount of £40. or £50. per annum, the rents and interest whereof are distributed in money amongst such of the poor as receive no parochial relief, and who live in dwellings under the value of £10. per annum.

In 1811, the population was 840, which of course rapidly increased by the erection of more than one hundred houses, as before mentioned, in that part adjoining to the town of Wisbech, across the canal; so that in the year 1821, it consisted of 1240 inhabitants, and is still increasing; this part has now obtained the name of "New Walsoken."

* See page 179.

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The Rev. Marmaduke Alington is the present rector of the church, who, by virtue of an agreement with his parishioners, receives a clear annual sum of £ 600. and the parish are bound to provide a curate for the due performance of divine worship.

Rectors since 1700.

John Herring, father of Dr. Thomas, Archbishop of
A.D. Canterbury,
1717 Edward Cross,
1733 Paul Bachelor,
1742 John Foster, D.D.
1788 Marmaduke Alington, A.M.

WEST WALTON,

So named from the wall or mound which was to defend it from the tides, &c., and called West in respect to another Walton in the hundred lying east of it: it is in Marshland, about three miles distant from Wisbech. A Saxon thane of great possessions was lord of it in the Confessor's time. At the survey it had seven salt works.* The prior of Lewes held a manor here, which took in great part of Walsoken, Walpole, Terrington, &c.; this, on the dissolution, was granted to Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk, together with the mediety of the church belonging to the said priory, but was afterwards forfeited to the crown, on the attainder of the duke of Norfolk. In 10th king James I. this lordship, with that of Walsoken

* Certain rents of salt used heretofore to be paid by divers persons who held lands of the lords of the manor here, and it may be observed that few towns in this hundred, lying near to the Ouse, &c. were without salt pits, or salt works, at the conquest, as well as after. See also page 6.

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and Walpole, was conveyed to John Hare, esq., brother of Sir Nicholas Hare; which John Hare had a son, Hugh Hare, created lord Coleraine, in Ireland, in 1625; Hugh Hare, the first lord Coleraine, was a great florist, and much in favour with king Charles I., who created him an Irish baron when he was only nineteen years of age. On the breaking out of the civil wars, he attended on his majesty, supplied him with several sums of money, and gave up his seat at Longford, in Wiltshire, for a royal garrison, which was afterwards taken and plundered by the rebels.

On the restoration, as a reward for his faithful services, he had an offer of an English peerage, which he refused. Henry, his eldest son, and second lord Coleraine, was an eminent antiquary and medallist. Henry Hare, the third and last baron of Coleraine, of that name and family, descended from John, younger brother of Sir Nicholas. His lordship married in 1717 Anne, only daughter of John Hanger, esq. some time governor of the bank of England; her fortune was nearly £100,000. She survived her lord five years, dying in 1754. This marriage was not attended with the felicity expected: within three years after it took place, her ladyship thought proper "utterly to forsake her lord's bed and house," nor could his repeated solicitations for twenty years, and offers of the most ample forgiveness, induce her to return. He, therefore, in 1740, formed a most solemn engagement* and

* The following curious form of divorce, if it may be so called, is extracted from the will of lord Coleraine:

"And whereas, it has been my heavy affliction, that Anne, lady Coleraine, whom I married with an affectionate and upright heart, did in the third year of our marriage, about October 1720, without any just cause or provocation by me given, but with the encouragement of selfish, misinformed,

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connexion with Miss Rose Duplessis, daughter of a French clergyman, by whom he had a daughter, Henrietta Rose Peregrina, who was married in 1763 to James Townshend, esq. alderman of Bishopsgate ward, London. His lordship died at Bath in 1749; Mrs. Townshend, his daughter, died in 1785, and the alderman, her husband, in 1787, when the estates devolved to their only son,

and evil-disposed persons, in violation of her solemn covenant, forsake my bed and house: And whereas, from thenceforward unto the year 1740, I did, by letters and messages, and at sundry times, solicit my said wife to return to her domestic duties, according to the solemn engagement made between us at our marriage, which on my part I was ever disposed to keep and perform, and for that end, had for so many years denied myself all the comforts of a married life, though very agreeable to my temper and constitution; and in my overtures I agreed to cancel all past offences, and receive and entertain and support her in a proper and ample manner, according to my fortune; and lastly, about the beginning of April 1740, I employed James West, esq. of Lincoln's Inn, (who seemed to think her not averse to a reconciliation) to offer the like ample and honourable terms to her, the said Anne, lady Coleraine, in order to prevail on her (if not determined to persist in a constant violation of her marriage vow) to come and live with me, govern my family, and partake in the enjoyment of my income; and to this I was not led by the lucre of that ample provision her father had left her, nor deterred from it by the obvious apprehensions of the evils or inconveniences that might follow, on taking into my bosom a person who had for so many years encouraged and habituated herself to a most obstinate and undeserved hatred and contempt for me. But when the said James West (as I have it under his own hand) sent to ask leave to offer ample terms of reconciliation from me, she returned him word, that she had no answer to give to such proposals. All which proceedings of the said lady Coleraine being well known and maturely weighed to and by Rose Duplessis, spinster, and myself, we two did on the 29th of April in the year last mentmentioned, in the presence of God, enter into a solemn mutual engagement to take each other for husband and wife, and to perform to each other the positive and relative duties of that relation: in consequence whereof, she, the said Rose, whom I esteem as my only true and virtuous wife, brought me a daughter on the 12th day of September, whom I have named Henrietta Rose Peregrina." His lordship then goes on to make some family settlements, &c.

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Henry Hare Townsend, esq.* The bishop of Ely had formerly a manor here, which continued in the see until the reign of queen Elizabeth; it then came to the crown, and is now held by Sir William H. J. B. Folkes, baronet, by lease from the crown. The Colvile family also once held a manor here, formerly Marshes' or De Marisco.

The family of Repps also had anciently a manor and lands in this town, called Lovell's manor. Ralph de Repps lived in the time of the Conqueror. Thomas de Repps was a commissioner of sewers to view the sea-walls, bridges, and causeways along the sea coast, in 2d Edward III. (1327.) And in 5th Charles I. (1629,) Henry Repps, esq. died, seized of a capital messuage and three hundred and twenty-four acres of land, of which John Repps, esq. was possessed about 1750, who died, leaving three daughters his co-heiresses. Frances married the reverend Mr. Baldwin, rector of Brand Parva, Dorothy married George Schultz, esq., and Virtue, John Hayes, esq. The estate became, by purchase, the property of the late James Bellamy, esq. of Wisbech, and now belongs to his representatives.

The church of West Walton is dedicated to St. Mary. It has a very handsome curious freestone tower, standing south of the church, a few yards distant,† in which are five bells. The nave and south aisle are covered with

* This gentleman died in the month of March 1827, leaving an only son, the Rev. Chauncey Hare Townsend.

† The steeple of the patriarchal church of St. Mark, at Venice, stand detached at a small distance from the church, as do many others in Italy. *Moore's View of Italy*, vol. i. page 47.

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lead. The roof is supported by six pillars on each side, dividing the the nave from the aisles, over each of which is a painted emblem of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

On the north side of the chancel, a little advanced from the pavement, used to lie the figure of a religious person in his habit, under a tabernacle, said to be an abbot. John Wace, priest of West Walton, was also buried in this church in 1536.

The chancel, having lately undergone repairs, has been considerably shortened, so that the ancient monument of the abbot under a tabernacle is not now to be seen. There is a marble slab on the pavement to the memory of Thomas Fawssett, of Wisbech, gentleman, who died 18th April 1798, æt 65, and of Alice Catherine, his wife, who died 30th March 1807, æt 73.* In the north aisle, at the east end, are two monumental stones raised to the memory of the before mentioned family of the Repps'; one is said to have had the date of 1561, and the other 1566, but the inscriptions are much defaced. In the nave is a large marble stone, which has been ornamented with a rim of brass, said to be to the memory of Richard Smith, a former rector in 1422. A neat mural monument has been recently placed at the east end of the north aisle, to the memory of Hannah Norton Wing, the late wife of John Wing, esq. of Wisbech, who died 19th August 1825, æt 31. "leaving "the remembrance of her virtues for a lesson to her "children." There is a small organ set up in the church by the present worthy and accomplished rector, and a singing gallery.

* The father and mother of major Fawssett, mentioned in note, page 31.

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The porch to the entrance of the church is formed of beautiful stone workmanship, of the Saxon order.

On a tablet affixed in the wall, within the church, in the north aisle, is the following record:

"To the immortal praise of God Almighty, that saveth "his people in adversity, be it kept in perpetual memory, "that on the 1st day of November 1613, the sea broke "in and overflowed all Marshland, to the great danger of "men's lives and loss of goods.

"On the 3d and 20th days of March 1614, this country "was overflowed with the fresh water, and on the 12th "and 13th days of September 1671, all Marshland was "again overflowed by the violence of the sea."

The church consists of two medieties, one in the patronage of the crown, held at this time by the reverend William Fawssett, A.M., and the other in the patronage of Henry Hare Townsend, esq., which is held by the reverend Atwill Lake, A.M. son of the late Sir Atwill Lake, baronet.

The bishop of Ely had a grant from king Henry III. of a weekly market here on Wednesday, and a fair every year on the day and day after the Assumption of the blessed Virgin, (15th and 16th August.)

Benefactions.

Mrs. Dales, of Walton, after certain bequests, gave the residue of her property to trustees, for the purpose of establishing a school for the instruction of such poor children in reading and writing, as her trustees should deem incapable of paying for their instruction. Such

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residue being converted into money, was invested in the public funds, and purchased £753. 15*s.* capital stock, in the three per cent. consolidated annuities, producing at this time a neat income of £22. 12*s.* 2*d.* which is paid to the master, to which the late Sigismund Trafford Southwell, esq.* added an annual donation of five guineas. The present master is Mr. George Shacklock.

The surviving trustees of this charity are

The Hon. and Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of Kildare,
Thomas Fawsett, esq. of Townley Castle, Ramsgate,
Mr. Thomas Bean, of Walton,
Mr. William Bean, ditto,
Mr. Daniel Aldham, ditto,
Mr. John Coker Aldham, ditto.

When the trustees are reduced to three, the survivors are to elect such other persons as shall make six or seven at most.

The churchwardens and overseers receive the rents of a tenement or public house called Walton Ferry House, and two acres of land in Gull Drove Field, in Walton, abutting upon the river bank.

Also eight acres in the marsh, on the west side of the river; seven acres in Eardale Field; six acres in Dixon Field; three acres in Newland Field, and two acres and three roods in the same field, all in Walton; and of ten acres and two roods of land in Walpole St. Peter's, together with two separate annuities of £1. each. The

* See page 490.

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rents arising from these last mentioned lands, and amounting to sums varying from £50. to £60. per annum, are regularly distributed about Christmas time to the most deserving and meritorious poor. Also there are nine almshouses or cottages in Walton, inhabited by such poor men, as, from bodily infirmities, or from numerous families, are incapable themselves of paying rents out of their own earnings.

WALPOLE or WALLPOOLE ST. PETER'S*

Takes its name from the Roman vallum against the sea, to which it is contiguous, and is situate in Norfolk, between six and seven miles from Wisbech.

There are several mounds in different parts of the township, which were probably of Roman origin,† and some remains of a Roman aqueduct were discovered about a century ago, which have been before referred to.‡

All the mention made of Walpole in Domesday book is, that John, nephew of one Waleran, an officer under the Conqueror, held lands at Walpole,§ though it appears that the church of Ely and the earl Warren held considerable lordships in the township of Walpole at that time.

In the township of Walpole there were formerly eight manors.‖ 1. Earl of Clare's, or Lovell's manor, which

* The emblems of the cross keys and cross swords are always placed together in the church, so that it is not improbable it was dedicated (like Wisbech) to St. Peter and St. Paul.

† See page 578. It has been said that the Romans had a station here for their cavalry in summer, which was changed for Castle Acre in the winter months.

‡ See page 11. § Vide Blomefield. ‖ See page 576, note.

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probably descended to him from John, the nephew of Waleran; it was a small lordship. There is still the site of Clare's house,* at Cross Keys, near a farm-house in the possession of Mr. Jump, solicitor, of Wisbech, and is called a decayed and reputed manor.†

2. Ely manor: this was given to the monastery at Ely by Oswi, the father of Ailwin, afterwards bishop of Elmham.‡ When Ely became an episcopal see, the manor was attached to it as a part of its revenue.§ The bishop of Ely had the patronage of St. Peter's church, and with the prior of Lewes, held here a weekly market‖ on Thursday. In the reign of Elizabeth, 1580, this manor and patronage of the church came to the crown.¶

The manor of Walpole Eldred, now lord Coleraine's, was given to the monastery of Ely, and with the advowson of the rectory, belonged to the bishop of Ely until the reign of queen Elizabeth, who obtained both the manor and rectory of the bishop.** The manor was sold by king James to Sir John Eldred, and was purchased about the year 1720, of one of his descendants, by lord Coleraine.††

3. Marshe's or Colvile's manor. Sir William Marsh had it 2d Richard I. (1190) and it afterwards came by marriage to Sir Roger Colvile, about A.D. 1300. Colvile's manor is near the Cross Keys, being part of a farm, one portion of which is in possession of Mr. Allen, and the other of Mr. Jump. Steed Girdlestone, esq. is now the lord of the manor of Walpole Colvile.

* In the Terrier, this is called "Corpus Christi Hall."

† Vide Bloomfield. ‡ See page 116. § See page 114.

‖ The site where this market was held appears to be in East Drove, opposite the Black Horse inn. ¶ See p. 114. ** Ibid. †† See p. 609.

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4. Walpole's manor: from this the earls of Orford, according to the Norman custom, assumed the name of Walpole, and appear to have been very early enfeoffed of lands in this township. Ralph de Walpole was bishop of Ely in 27th Edward I. (1298); and about this period the family removed from Walpole to Houghton, on the marriage of Richard, son of Reginald de Walpole, with Emma, daughter of Walter, son of William de Harelton, or Houghton. In 5th Edward II. (1312) Henry de Walpole appears to have been lord both of Houghton and Walpole.*

5. Rochford's manor. The family de Rochford, who took their name from a town in Essex, had a manor here held of the see of Ely. Sir Ralph, son of Sir Sayer de Rochford, who married the daughter and co-heiress of Sir James Walpole, lived at Walpole in the year 1350, he was probably a large contributor towards building the church of St. Peter, and was buried in that church A.D. 1369. These manorial lands remained in the Rochford family until about A.D. 1500, when they became vested in the see of Ely, the bishop being then capital lord, and thus remained until they came to the crown in the reign of Elizabeth.

* Little more than conjecture can now be offered respecting the site of the ancient residence of the Walpole family. The moated remains of a house formerly of some consideration are still to be seen in a field belonging to the late H. H. Townsend, esq., to the north-west of the house now captain Falkner's, occupied by Israel Smith; these remains are held of Walpole fee. The family "de Walpole" does not appear to have lived in Walpole after they came into possession of Houghton; it is therefore probable that this might have been their hall; and when Sir Ralph de Rochford married a co-heiress of Sir James Walpole, this hall came into the Rochford family, and the site is to this day known by the name of Rochford, or, as it is now corrupted, Richford.

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6. Denver's manor or Godard's appears to have been a division of Walpole's manor. Henry de Walpole (who lived in the reign of Henry III.) dying without issue, his manor was divided between his two aunts, Isabel and Alice de Walpole. Alice married Walter de Denver, about 30th Henry III. (1245.) Walter Godard married Catherine, an heiress of Denver, (1381) 5th Richard II., and held the manor and advowson of Walpole chapel, and presented to the church A.D. 1395. He probably was a great contributor also to the building of the church, the arms of Denver and Godard being on the south porch. In 1511, Sir James Hobart held this manor and the advowson of the chantry in the chapel of St. Catharine, in Walpole, and Sir Walter Hobart had the advowson of St. Mary's chapel at the fen end in Walpole. Afterwards it came into the family of the Hunstons,* and Thomas Hunston sold it to John Hare, with certain messuages, lands, &c. that came to the Hunstons from the Godards,† Walpoles and Rochfords.

7. Prior of Lewes' manor. This was a part of the prior's capital manor of West Walton, for William, earl Warren, founder of the priory of Lewes, in Sussex, in the time of William the Conqueror, gave the manor of West Walton to that convent. The prior had the advowson of the church of St. Andrew in Walpole, of the gift of Hamelin Plantagenet, earl Warren, with

* Henry Hunston and his heirs held much land in Walpole in the reign of Elizabeth, as appears from terriers at that time. He was buried in the church of St. Peter, and probably lived in the capital messuage to the south-west of the church, belonging to the late H. H. Townsend, esq. (late Coleraine's.)

† No remains of a residence of the Denvers or Godards in Walpole are now discoverable; there are several fields now held of Denver's fee, near Kettle Row and the Casto Dyke, (now Wisbech turnpike): the houses in Kettle Row are called the Old Almshouses.

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a weekly market on Thursday, and a fair on the feast of St. Peter, and for two days more, in common with the bishop of Ely. At the dissolution, it fell to the crown, and in 29th Henry VIII. (1537,) was granted to Thomas, duke of Norfolk, with the appropriated rectory and advowson of the vicarage, and purchased by John Hare, esq. who also, about 1604, bought the Hunston estate, and the whole then passed to lord Coleraine, who died possessed of it in 1749, and on his death it came as an escheat to the crown, his daughter being a minor and an alien.

8. Pannel's manor. Christopher Langham had livery of it in 1539, held, as it is said, by the prior of Lewes, and which formerly belonged to the family of Welby in Lincolnshire, and afterwards, in the reign of Henry VIII., this manor came into the Coney family, and Thomas Coney, of Sutton, in Lincolnshire, father of William Coney, esq. of Walpole, one of the justices of the peace, lived here. William had a son, Robert, who married Alice, daughter of Sir Robert Barkham, of Wainfleet, knight, about 1655, and the family became residents at Walpole, where they continued until the death of colonel Coney in 1801.

Of these manors that of Walpole Colvile alone retains its name, which still continues a distinct manor, of which Mr. Girdlestone is the lord; all the others are merged in two great manors, Walpole Eldred and West Walton Coleraine; Walpole Eldred contains the manors of Ely, Walpole, Rochford, Denver and the Honour of Clare; West Walton Coleraine contains that of the prior of Lewes and Pannels, of both which the reverend Chauncey Hare Townsend, only son of the late Henry Hare Townsend, esq. is lord.

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The church of St. Peter is one of the most beautiful parish churches in England, built of freestone, consisting of a nave, two aisles, and a chancel, all covered with lead, with a noble stately tower of stone embattled, standing at the west end.

The first notice taken of a church here is in the 3d Edward I., (1274) when it was found to be in the patronage of the bishop of Ely. Blomefield mentions the glazing of the church windows in 1423. The right of presentation remained in the see of Ely until the reign of Elizabeth, when it came to the crown, and has continued to be a crown living up to the present time.*

Over the entrance of the south porch are the arms of Godard and of Denver, and between them Godard and Denver quartered, with two coats of arms east and west, unintelligible at the present time. An intermarriage took place between these families, from whence sprung Sir John Godard, governor of Loviers, in Normandy, in 6th Henry V. On the south side, over the archway, beneath the altar, is a figure of the amulet worn by the Rochfords. Walter Godard, who married Catherine, the heiress of Denver, quartered the arms about 1375. And Sir Ralph de Rochford, who married Maud, daughter and coheiress of Sir J. Walpole, lived in Walpole at this time.

* In the register of Walpole St. Peter's, of the date of 1732, is the following entry: The rule of tithing is to ascertain the distinct rights of the two livings as follows: All lands holden of the manors late Eldred, Colvile, and Clare, pay great tithes, and all houses standing on such lands pay small tithes to the rector. All lands holden of the manor of West Walton cum Membris pay great tithes to the impropriator, and all houses standing on such lands pay small tithes to the vicar.

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These most probably have been the great benefactors towards the building of the present elegant church, the date of which may be fixed at about A.D. 1400. Formerly there was much painted glass of saints, &c. in the windows of the chancel, no relics of which are now to be found, the greater part having been removed about forty years ago, on the reparation of the church, though the spoliation might have commenced long before.

The font is curious, with this date thereon, "Anno. "Dni. MCCCC. x — „ „" and "O thanks O" with union roses intermixed. The top of the font is neatly carved in wood, the pannel painted, and the whole opens.

In the chancel is a mural monument, and under an arch in the south wall is a small effigy of a man kneeling before a desk, with a book, erected by William Coney, esq. on which are these hexameters:

"En pius ornator templi benefactor egenis
"Solamen patriæ consorti fidus amicus
"Robertus Butler obiit anno 1630, æt 59."

Mr. Butler was a public benefactor to the parish,* and probably contributed to ornament the interior of the church, it being presumed that about this time he placed the beautiful carved work over the font.

A fine brass eagle, used as a reading desk,† with expanded wings, supported by three lions, stands in the nave, and likewise a handsome brass chandelier is suspended from the roof.

* See public benefactions in a following page. † See page 532, note.

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A poor box on the entrance to the middle aisle bears date 1634. In the chancel are ancient seats, ornamented with figures painted in front. These sedilia or stone stalls are found in many of our parish churches, and have been differently accounted for by antiquarians. Some have called them confessionaries; others say that they were constructed solely for the accommodation of the priests at certain intervals during the celebration of mass. They are generally placed near the altar, frequently under beautiful Gothic arches, subdivided and enriched with buttresses, finials, &c.* The ascent to the communion table has a grand appearance, consisting of twelve steps, which, on the outside, form an open arch to walk through, making a communication from the north to the south side of the church yard. The space under this arch is said to have been formerly used by the parishioners, who were obliged by the badness and length of the ways to come on horseback, as a shelter for their steeds, whilst they themselves were attending divine service in the church.

In the chancel is a brass memorial to Sir John Whetan,† another to the wife and son of Barnabas Frencham; also marble slabs to Henry Frencham and William Hart,‡ all rectors of this parish: part of a stone records the decease of Francis Ireland, vicar of St. Andrew's, A.D. 1632, and another of William Waterhouse, curate. On the south side is a mural monument to Robert Butler, and to T. Colborn, vicar of St. Andrew's.

* Archæologia, vol. 2.

† "Of your charitie pray for the soul of Syr John Whetan su' tyme "p'son of Walpole and of Leverington, wche decessied the 23d July 1537, "on whose soul, I'hu, have mercy."

‡ William Hart died 2d May 1726, æt 79. The descendants of this family now reside at Boston, in Lincolnshire.

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At the east end of the north aisle is a slab, which once was the top of an altar monument to Sir Ralph de Rochford, and Maud, his wife, who were buried there A.D. 1369.*

By the side of this is a slab, now covered over by a seat, which has lost its brass, and was in memory of William, son of Sir John de Rochford, constable of Wisbech castle in 1403.†

At the upper end of the middle aisle is a gravestone, of which the brass is lost, and about which nothing is known. Lower down is a gravestone with a brass plate, to the memory of Mr. Butler, above referred to.

To the north of the middle aisle, and south of the Coneys' vault, was formerly an altar monument in memory of one of the Hunston family, possibly Henry Hunston, who married Jane, daughter of Sir John Audley, of Swaffham, knight, as it appears from Blomefield, that the arms of Hunston and Audley were quartered on the tomb; but within the last six or seven years this tomb has been destroyed, and seats are now placed over it by the churchwardens, who have shewn greater zeal for modern accommodation, than respect for the memory of the dead, and the remains of antiquity.

The east end of the south aisle is railed and taken in by a screen, in which is the vault of the Coney family,

* The legend on the tomb was "Radulphus Rochford Miles, anno millesimo tricentissimo sexagesimo nono." This date on brass was lost in 1730. *Memorandum in Register*, 1732. See page 234.

† See page 130.

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with carved stones in memory of eight of its different members, viz. Robert Coney, who died 1707, æt 75; Alice, his wife, daughter of Sir Robert Barkham, died in 1676, æt 41; Robert, their son, died in 1681, æt 21; William, their son, died 1742, æt 82, who married a daughter of Sir H. Edwin; Edwin, and Elizabeth, his wife, daughter of C. Turner, esq. of Lynn, she died 1745, æt 46, he in 1755, æt 68. Also Robert, and Ann, his wife, the former died in 1801, æt 83, the latter in 1802, æt 62. On a side stone are recorded their infant children; and lower down in this aisle are stones for the family of the Richards'.

In the east end of the south aisle * was the chantry of St. James, which Sir Thomas Daniel, governor of Rising castle in the reign of Henry VI. had a patent to found and endow, with thirty-two acres of land; and in one of the upper windows of this aisle used to be a profane representation of the Supreme Being, now very properly removed.

The chantry, (with the burying place of the Rochfords,) which appears to have been dedicated to St. Mary, was also in the south aisle, towards the east end. In the east window was a painting of Sir Ralph de Rochford in armour, and of his lady, on their knees. This Sir Ralph was a descendant of the one whose tomb is in the aisle, and was living in Walpole about 1446, he

* In the east window of this aisle was formerly the effigies of a person on his knees, with a broad belt over his shoulders, supplicating before the figure of St. James, and this label:

"Tu sis memor mei Jacobe in p sen'tia Dei."

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appears to have married into the Godard family, as the female figure had on her vest the arms of Rochford and Godard.

Rectors of Walpole Saint Peter's.

A.D.

1400 Thomas Patesley, afterwards dean of Ely,
1411 Bartholomew Colman,
1537 John Whetan, died rector—brass in chancel at St. Peter's,
Andrew Pern,
1594 William Brown,
1598 John Jox,
1599 Henry Frencham,
1627 Barnabas French,
1661 Tobias Hall,
369 Wexreslaus Libanus,
1670 William Hart,
1725 Henry Fysh,
1743 William Everard,
Dr. Stevens,
1800 John Cross Morphew, A.M.
1824 William Chester, A.M.

Baptisms and Burials from St. Peter's Register.

Year.	Baptisms.	Burials.
1560	19	9
1600	25	21
1650	32	24
1700	26	15
1750	17	18
1800	18	16
1825	40	27

By the census in 1821, the population was 1104.

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WALPOLE ST. ANDREW'S

ADJOINS to the parish of Walpole St. Peter's, from which the church is not distant above three quarters of a mile across the fields, and is of stone, well built and regular, with a nave, north and south aisles, and a chancel. At the west end is a square tower with four bells.

In the 3d Edward I. (1274) the prior of Lewes, in Sussex, was found to have the advowson of the church, of the gift of Hamelin Plantagenet, earl Warren.

At the dissolution, the manor of the prior of Lewes, &c. in Walpole and West Walton, came to the crown in 29th Henry VIII. (1537) and was granted to Thomas, duke of Norfolk, with the appropriated rectory and vicarage, and afterwards purchased by John Hare, esq. as mentioned in the account of this manor in the description of Walpole St. Peter's.*

Henry Hare, lord Coleraine, annexed to the vicarage the impropriation of the rectory A.D. 1730, and the patronage of this church still is in the hands of his descendant, the son of the late Henry Hare Townsend, esq.†

* See page 619.

† The following memorandum occurs in the register belonging to Walpole St. Peter's: "The crown presents to the rectory of Walpole Saint Peter, and the lord Coleraine to the vicarage of Walpole Saint Andrew, to which the present lord, out of his singular piety, has annexed the impropriation: T. Colborn, A.M. late fellow of Corpus Christi college, Oxford, and his lordship's chaplain, now vicar, being the first clerical impropriator. One mediety of both churches is in the gift of the crown, and the other in the gift of lord Coleraine, and both rector and vicar ought to be presented to and inducted into a mediety of each church."

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Little more than conjecture can be formed respecting the precise date of the building of the church of St. Andrew's; from its style of architecture and general appearance, it may be placed fifty years posterior to the church of St. Peter's. Blomefield mentions the arms of Rochford, Dennis, Dudley, &c., to have been painted in the windows. It appears that a descendant of lord Dudley's intermarried with the daughter of Robert Godard about 1440. He seems to have inherited the property of the Dennis', in Walpole, and possibly might be a benefactor towards the building of St. Andrew's church. Blomefield has a curious extract from a will of a vicar of St. Andrew's A.D. 1502. "John Dacot, vicar, "wills to be buried on the north side of this church, "before his hall,* and gives thirty stone of lead to the "*church work*, and a suit of vestments of white damask, "branched with angels of gold or lily pots, like the "red suit in the said church, and a cow to the parish." From these two data, therefore, we may place the building of this church between 1450 and 1500.

In the year 1809 upwards of £1000. was expended in repairing this church, which had fallen into a state of great dilapidation, and at that time a new window was placed at the east end of the chancel, against which, over the communion table, is a painting of the Descent from the cross.

There are no monuments or stones of any antiquity. In the north aisle are the remains of one now obliterated, most probably it was in memory of John Dacot, mentioned above.

* The site of Dacot Hall is in the homestall of Mr. Charles Boon.

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Two chapels or chantries appear to have been dedicated in this church; one to St. James, and the other to St. Mary, both at the east end of the north and south aisles.*

Vicars of Walpole St. Andrew's.

A.D.		A.D.	
1401	Richard Revel,	1599	Francis Ireland,
1409	Richard Chamberlain,	1632	William Sandford,
	John Cannock,	1653	Howard Bernard,
1472	William Canyngston,	1672	Bradley Coldnell,
1504	Thomas Leman,	1684	William Hart,
1504	John Dacot,	1725	Thomas Colburn,
1580	William Dacot,	1762	Dr. Smith,
1597	John Holland,	1808	Robert Hankinson, M.A.
1597	Robert Dixon,		

Baptisms and Burials from St. Andrew's Register.

Year.	Baptisms.	Burials.
1654	8	4
1700	4	3
1750	3	4
1800	4	1
1825	22	17

According to the census in 1821, the population was 175 males, and 185 females, making together 360.

* In the terrier mention is made of lands that formerly belonged to the chantry of St. James and to the chapel of St. Mary, both in the church of St. Andrew.

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Chapels.

There were formerly several chapels in the township of Walpole, of which no vestiges now remain, except that in the terriers several lands still retain the names of the chapels to which they once belonged. In all probability they fell into decay at the time of the dissolution. 1st. The chapel of St. Katherine,* which appears to have been situated on the west of East Drove, between March Lane and Reeves' Lane. The advowson of this chapel once belonged to the Godards.

2d. The chapel of St. Edmund.† This probably belonged to the Rochford family, against whose hall it was contiguous. The site of this chapel is to the east of West Drove, near March Lane on the south, and the field goes to this day by the name of Chapel Yard.

3d. The chapel of St. Thomas,‡ which was afterwards converted into an inn, called the Saracen's Head, and is now a farm house, occupied by Samuel Peckett,

* In Long Swineholm field and St. Katherine's. Henry Hare Townsend, esq. late Coleraine, holds (formerly the chapel of St. Katherine, now wasted) eighty-seven acres free, called Katherine, next Reeves' lane north, March lane south, and East drove east. *Terrier.*

† In Long Swineholm field; H. H. Townsend, late Coleraine, held once a chapel, afterwards a cottage, and now all wasted, and one rood of free land abutting upon West drove west.

‡ Hogholm and Greesholm field; Dillingham, late Johnson, holds the chapel of St. Thomas, now called the Saracen's Head, next the common way on two parts.

Thorough Field. Israel Smith, late Townsend, esq., holds a messuage, and two acres and two roods free, called Guild-hall of St. Thomas, abutting upon East drove east.

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having East Drove to the west, and the turnpike to the south. In the neighbourhood of this chapel was the guild hall of St. Thomas, which appears to have been nearly opposite the present Methodist chapel.

4th. The chapel of St. Mary,* at the fen end, which was situated on the East Drove, about half way between the casto dyke or turnpike and the smeeth gate; the advowson of which was in the Godards, and afterwards in the Hobarts.

5th. The chantry of St. James and St. Peter, which was on the site of the present poor house, abutting upon St. Peter's church yard and the rectory north, and Chapel Gate to the west.

6th. Blomefield mentions the chapel of St. Helen's, at Cross Keys, but of this no mention is made, either in the terriers or any other document belonging to the parish. He says, "the sea bank at this town from St. "Helen's chapel, next Terrington to Norich Gate in "West Walton, is three miles."

Charities.

1st. Butler's charity, consisting of 37A. 1R. of land in Walpole, and four cottages, called Butler's Almshouses, left by Robert Butler† A.D. 1630, to poor widows who have been born in the township of Walpole, and resident in the parish of Walpole St. Peter ten years

* Est ibm unu messuagiu nup Capell Btæ Mariæ in le fen end inter East drove ex omnibus partibus. *Terrier, reign of queen Elizabeth.*

† Mr. Butler dwelt in the house on the north west side of the church, wherein colonel Cony lived, and afterwards admiral Bentinck.

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at the least, immediately before her or their election, and have been but the wife of one husband. The rent of the above land is applied to the maintenance of four women, who occupy the cottages, and receive three and sixpence weekly, a chaldron of coals annually, and a blue cloth gown once in two years.

2d. There are twenty-seven acres of land, unknown by whom and when left, called Town Bailiff land, the rent of which is applied to the repairs of the church ways; this rent is received by the churchwardens.

3d. Dole Land in Walpole St. Peter's, consisting of a house and twelve acres and one rood of land, which have since received in addition, by the inclosure of Marshland Smeeth and Fen, 27A. 1R. 7P. making a total of 39A. 2R. 7P. let for the annual rent of £81. It is also unknown when or by whom this land was left, or for what particular purpose. The rents are received by the churchwardens, and annually distributed amongst the most industrious poor, and such as maintain their families without parochial relief: the amount according to the size of the respective families.

4th. Dole Land in Walpole St. Andrew's; this consists of one messuage, one cottage, and twenty-three acres old inclosed land; by the marsh inclosure (the award of which is dated in 1789) it received an addition of 26A. 2R. 22P. and by the inclosure of the smeeth and fen (award dated 1803) it received 7A. 1R. 17P. of smeeth, and 27A. 3R. 20P. fen, making a total of 84A. 3R. 19P. and in 1813 let for the annual rent of £152. 10s. The present feoffees are Thomas Fawssett, esq. and Mr. John Esam Tweedy; the land, with the exception of the smeeth

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and fen, and four acres occupied by Mr. Jump, is divided into portions of one acre each, let to one of the poor of Walpole St. Andrew's at a reduced rent.

5th. A public free school is established for the instruction of the children in the parishes of Walpole St. Peter's and St. Andrew's. This was formerly kept over the south porch of St. Peter's church; but in 1813 a new school-room was built by voluntary contribution. The master's salary is paid by the rent of fifty-six acres of land left by Anthony Curton A.D. 1706, and situated in Terrington St. John's. Mr. John Bridgman is the present master.

It is in contemplation at this time to make application to the court of Chancery to appoint new trustees, several of the old ones being deceased, in order to consolidate the funds of the respective charities before mentioned, and to appropriate the benefit of them according to a decretal order. The worthy vicar of St. Andrew's erected a room a few years ago adjoining to his dwelling house, which is set apart for a Sunday school: it is superintended by Mrs. R. Hankinson, under whose prudent management the whole is conducted, and not less than eighty scholars are instructed in useful learning.

The quantity of land in the parish of Walpole St. Peter is about 7150 acres; in the parish of Walpole St. Andrew 2173, making a total of 9323 computed acres; of which, 5590 are arable, and 3733 grass.

The Romish Saint, Goderick, is said to have been a native of Walpole St. Andrew, and to have originally followed the humble occupation of a pedlar; he

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afterwards went on a pilgrimage to Rome, and even to Jerusalem: in the latter part of his life he became a hermit, and lived some time at Finchale, near Durham, where he is said to have worn out no less than three successive suits of iron clothes. Many miracles were ascribed to him, of which, and of his life, Matthew Paris gives a relation at large.*

At the place called Cross Keys in this parish, is the passage over the Washes † to Long Sutton, in Lincolnshire, at the mouth of the river Nene, which, being subject to the flux and reflux of the tides, is fordable only at low water for carriages, carts, and horses, and at no time for persons on foot, without great risk and danger. During certain periods of the winter season, even this passage across is entirely impeded and stopped, and at all times considered inconvenient and dangerous; to obviate which, it was resolved to construct a bridge across the channel, from the western to the eastern shore of this wash or river, and accordingly an act was last year obtained, intituled, "An Act for constructing a "bridge across Sutton Wash, otherwise Cross Keys "Wash, between the counties of Lincoln and Norfolk," which received the royal assent on 26th May 1826.‡

* Matthew Paris, page 82. Goderick lived about A.D. 1070.

† See page 136.

‡ The plan proposed by Mr. Kinderley, for bringing the Nene from Wisbech by a cut across Marshland, was intended to have commenced at Walpole St. Andrew's, and thus to carry all the waters into the Ouse about Tilney Goole. See note, page 55.

The compiler begs to acknowledge the kind attention of the Rev. R. E. Hankinson, the son of the worthy vicar, in investigating many ancient particulars in the two parishes of Walpole, particularly in regard to the manors, and afterwards permitting the fruits of his researches to be inserted in this work.

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TERRINGTON ST. CLEMENT'S,

In the hundred of Freebridge Marshland, is distant from Lynn, by the ferry, four miles, by the bridge, five miles and a half, from London one hundred, and from Wisbech ten miles. It lies to the westward of Lynn, bearing a little towards the north, and is bounded by the sea on the north and east. The eastern arm extends to the port of Lynn, the northern to that of Wisbech. The number of statute acres is 7760A. 3R. 6P.; of houses 285, and the population 1408.

The soil is alluvial and rich, with a flat surface, and in parts handsomely covered with wood. Its antiquity is buried in the womb of time; but the old barrier bank to the north bears the name of "Roman," and this place was well known as a town in the Saxon age.* By this bank the whole parish is nearly divided into two equal parts. Eight hundred acres were reclaimed from the sea about thirty years ago, and are now called the Common Marsh. Several hundred acres have been since embanked by the late admiral Bentinck. The act which has passed the legislature in this sessions,† for improving the outfall of the river Nene, will divert the Wisbech channel through the Guy's Hospital estate, on the Lincolnshire side, whereby the whole estuary to the north, called the Cross Keys Wash, now dividing Norfolk from Lincolnshire, will hereafter be silted up.

George Bentinck, esq. son of the late admiral of that name, and a descendant from the brother of the first duke of Portland, is the largest proprietor, although he has no place of residence here. The manor of Terrington belongs to him. This manor remained in the see of Ely

* Parkyns, page 231. † See page 410.

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until the death of Dr. Cox, in 1581,* when it came to the crown, and in 1696, was granted by king William to an ancestor of the present Mr. Bentinck.

Sir William H. J. B. Folkes, baronet, has also a considerable estate here, but nothing more than good farm houses thereon. The manor of Howards is his property. Another manor called the Branches belongs to John Wing, esq. of Wisbech.

Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, baronet, purchased an estate in this parish about the year 1810, upon which he has built a handsome mansion, where he resides. The pleasure grounds are laid out with taste, and kept with remarkable neatness.

About the same time, the Graffier Fagel, a Dutch emigrant,† afterwards ambassador from the king of the Netherlands to this country, purchased a house and lands, and made this place his residence. The agriculture of the country was improved by the scientific mode of management introduced by him from the north of England, and his little Dutch garden was the admiration of all who visited it.

The right honourable lord William Cavendish Bentinck, brother to the present duke of Portland, is the possessor of that property.‡

Here also lives, in the seat of his ancestors, (a house of great antiquity, built in part of freestone,) Thomas

* See page 114.

† He was hereditary secretary to the stadtholder: the term Graffier implies that dignity.

‡ This respected nobleman is at this time about to take his departure for India, to enter on the high office of governor-general.

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Upwood, esq. lord of the manor of Lovels. His venerable trees are an ornament to the country; the care he takes of them, and the plantations he has made, will endear his name to the lovers of rural beauty, when he himself shall have been long forgotten.

The rectory is attached to the Margaret professorship of divinity at Cambridge, and is in the gift of that university, having been granted to it by king James I. Its present possessor is the right reverend Herbert, lord bishop of Peterborough. Seven acres of land, including the church yard, with a house and large barn, belong to the rectory.

The vicarage is in the gift of the crown. It is mentioned in the taxation of pope Nicholas,* but the endowment is not to be found in the episcopal registry of Norwich: the records there of institutions, &c. as returned by the registrar to the special committee of the house of commons, beginning with the year 1299.

The reverend Ambrose Goode, A. M. is the present incumbent. Attached to the vicarage are three roods of land, and in the parish of Terrington St. John's, five acres, one rood and six perches, in Butterman Field, and two acres and eighteen perches, including the church yard, with a cottage thereon, in Church Field. There is also a customary payment of ten shillings and sixpence arising out of land, for a sermon in St. John's church on new Midsummer day.

The church is a noble Gothic structure of freestone, built in the form of a cross, highly ornamented, and of a cathedral like appearance, dedicated to St. Clement.

* See page 246.

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It is one hundred and sixty-six feet long, forty-six wide, in the transepts; has a nave and two aisles, and contains seventy windows. The side arches between the nave and the transepts are of singular beauty, and little less than forty feet high from the pavement. Those towards the east and west have not less beauty, and are almost as high. At the angles of them all are ornamented projecting bases; from these was evidently intended to spring a lantern or dome, which, if ever, is not now, existing. The roof of the transept is a little higher than that of the church: seven arches divide the aisles from the nave, and a Gothic window towards the east surmounts the roof of the chancel. Time has destroyed the beautiful old figured roof made of oak, and a new one of fir, covered with lead, has this year been completed at the sole expense of the inhabitants, which redounds much to their credit, for they have great reason to pride themselves on so beautiful an edifice.

The interior of the church is strikingly light, airy, and elegant, and the number of windows contributes not a little to the pleasing appearance which the building presents to the eye of the beholder.

The font is ancient, and is ascended by three steps; the top thereof is carved in wood, with pannels opening. In the inside is represented, in painting, the Temptation of our Saviour, the Baptism by St. John, with our Saviour ascending from the water, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

The altar is ascended by six steps, which, with the large window over the communion table, much to be admired, forms a noble perspective.

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In the chancel, on the north side, is a plain tablet of the date of 1814, recording that "Near this spot are "interred the earthly remains of William Bentinck, esq. "vice-admiral of the blue. This simple monument is "inscribed by Frances, his widow."

Within the rails of the altar is a monumental stone, with a line drawn down,

In memory of John Albert Bentinck, captain in the navy, who died in 1775, æt 29.	Also Renira, his wife, who died in 1792, æt 42.

And three children, who died young.

At the foot of the steps is a slab to John Towers Allen, clerk, who died in 1787, æt 43. Also several monumental stones to the family of Edwards, viz.

On the north side of the chancel, a mural monument to Dorothy, wife of John Edwards, daughter of Thorogood Upwood, who died in 1721-22; and to the said John Edwards, who died in 1733. Also another mural monument to Frances Edwards, who died in 1747.

A slab to Catherine Edwards, daughter of Thomas Somersby, esq. who died in 1779, and to John Edwards, who died in 1797, also Catherine their daughter.

There are several monuments to the Upwood family. Samuel Upwood who died in 1716, æt 38, and Dorothy, his wife, in 1773, æt 85. Also to Eliza, daughter of Thomas and Ann Upwood, who died in 1748, and two other daughters.

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Samuel Upwood, gent. who died in 1777; Ann, wife of the reverend Thorogood Upwood, in 1787, and the said Thorogood Upwood, in 1794.

The reverend Nalson Brathwaite, rector of Lynn St. Peter's, who died in 1793.

Also to Ann, wife of James Everard, esq. of Lynn, who died in 1809.

Also to Elizabeth Ann and Henrietta Latus, daughters of James and Elizabeth Everard; the former died in 1803, the latter in 1804.

In the transept on the north side is the creed, written in the old black letter, and on the south the Lord's prayer, both in excellent preservation, though done in the year 1635. On the north side is a vault for the family of Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, before mentioned, and near thereto is a gravestone, with the arms of Barker, to the memory of Peter Barker, who died in 1688.

Under the transept is an ancient tomb stone, with a brass, bearing the date of 1528, to the memory of John Coraunt, and Joan, his wife.

On a pillar is a marble tablet to commemorate John Ascham, esq. born at Boston, Lincolnshire, who died in 1675.

A neat marble monument is affixed on the south wall, sacred to the memory of Rachel, the wife of the Rev. Ambrose Goode, A.M. vicar, who died 12th June 1824, aged 54 years, "truly lamented,—in the faith and

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" fear of the Lord, teaching her surviving family and " friends, by an example of patient resignation and sweet " composure, how to commend their spirits into the " hands of a faithful Creator."

In the south aisle is a mural monument to Anderson Allen, junior, son of Anderson Allen, who died in 1764, aged 25; and also to the said Anderson Allen, and Jane, his wife; she died in 1779, and he in 1786.

On the floor is a slab to Richard Pratt, who died in 1669, and to James Pratt; and an old marble gravestone, with a modern inscription, for Robert Wardale, esq. who died in 1700. In the middle of the nave, or body of the church, is a gravestone to the memory of Henry Pratt, besides several other defaced monumental stones. Thomas Dudley, descended from lord Dudley, who is said to have married a daughter of Robert Godard, esq.* was buried in this church; the said Robert Godard is also here interred, who died in 1448.

At the west end of the nave is an altar monument to the memory of John Henson, a former vicar, who died in 1711. Here also stands an immensely tall ladder of seventy staves.

Directly opposite the north door of this beautiful church is that of a magnificent tower, at the distance of about three yards. The tower is a massive building of freestone, eighty feet high, and thirty-six feet square at the bottom, containing a ring of six bells. The walls terminate in battlements, springing from a rich freize, and at the angles were originally four large pinnacles,

* Parkyns. See page 627.

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and four smaller ones between the former. On the battlements of the south aisle are shields carved with the arms of Godard, Denver, Rochford, the bishop of Ely, &c. all probably benefactors to the building.

It is intended this year to replace the pinnacles by a private subscription.

Adjoining to the chancel, at the north-east end, is the old school, built of freestone. Beneath it is a place called the dungeon, once perhaps a bishop's prison.

A new room for a school was built in 1818, by voluntary contribution; it is established on the national plan, and is supported by an original bequest of Dr. Newcome, a former rector and professor, of £3. 6s. per annum, with some private subscriptions, and two-pence a week from every scholar. The parish also make the schoolmaster their vestry clerk.

The same learned professor likewise presented the parish with two handsome silver flagons for communion plate, and a library of books on divinity. Attached to the new school is a house, built at the sole expense of the right honourable lord William Cavendish Bentinck, for the purpose of a dispensary. In this the schoolmaster has the present privilege of residing. It is supposed that this is the first village dispensary in the kingdom. It was originally stocked with drugs by the benevolence of individuals, and the supply was kept up by a small charge upon the sick, who paid for their medicine. The sum however was not great, (about £8. upon a population of 1400 people), and it is now defrayed by the parish.

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The advantages are these:

Regular attendance of the surgeon twice a week at the dispensary.
The usual attendance at the houses besides.
The best drugs in great plenty.
No increase of expense to the parish beyond the price of drugs.

The autumn of 1826 will long be remembered as one of great sickness; twenty or thirty people were seen at the dispensary at one time, and the drugs for the year ending at Lady-day 1827 came to £26. The funerals for the last thirteen years average thirty-three per annum. Thirty, however, have been called to their house of clay within the present year (just six months.) The parish is now healthy, but within the last few months has sufferred from a very awful visitation: the canine rabies raged, and filled the country with dread. Many animals were bitten and died. Four persons within this parish had to lament this terrible scourge; one, a lad of fourteen, was taken with hydrophobia six weeks after he had received the injury, and died within forty-eight hours. The scar on the hand enlarged and turned blue, convulsions came on, and seized upon the muscles of the breast, and increased in violence even by a current of air from the door, which the patient endeavoured to avoid by hiding himself behind the curtain; he complained of great thirst, and at the sight of water endeavoured greedily to swallow it, at length he died in agony. A woman bitten a few weeks ago has suffered amputation of the thumb; another woman, bitten at the same time, had the wounded part cut out.

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There is a chapel dedicated to St. John, belonging to the church of St. Clement, which seems to have been built in 1423. Licence being granted to John Belling to build a chapel in the lordship of the bishop of Ely, at the cross called Peykes Cross; it now remains a chapel to the said church, for the service of the parishioners, about three miles from the mother church nearer to Wisbech, from which it is free, and is said to have been made so by Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, in 1530; but no institution to it is found as a parochial church. It is a regular pile, with a nave, two aisles, and a chancel covered with lead, a square stone tower with four pinnacles and four bells. A free chapel, dedicated to St. James, is also said to have once existed here, but dissolved in the time of Edward VI.; the site, however, is not now even known.

Walter Tyrington, LL.D. a celebrated writer and author, and John Colton, the first master of Gonvile hall or Caius college, in Cambridge, who was preferred to the primacy of Ireland by king Henry IV., about 1404, and made archbishop of Armagh, were both born in this town.

In Nicholls' account of the Spalding society, there is mention made of one William Burwell, brought up as a common labourer, afterwards servant to Mr. Lynn, of Spalding, and who, without any instruction, made a pack of cards, and drew pictures, and was afterwards advanced to Terrington school.*

* Account of the Spalding society, page 16.

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The common called the Smeeth, belonging to Terrington, Tilney, Clenchwarton, Walpole, West Walton, Walsoken, and Emneth, was heretofore famous for feeding cattle, whereon 30,000 or more large Marsh-land sheep, and the great cattle of the above seven towns, were said continually to feed—a piece of land so fruitful (as was repeated by a courtier to king James I. at his first coming to the crown,) "that if over night a wand "or rod was laid on the ground, by the morning it "would be covered with grass of that night's growth, "so as not be discerned;" to which that king is said to have replied in a jocose manner, "that he knew some "grounds in Scotland, where, if a horse was put in over "night, they could not see him or discern him in the morning."* This common was inclosed by virtue of an act of Parliament passed in the 36th year of his late majesty George III. (1796.)

The following Rectors appear on record:

1608 Simon Wells, S.T.P.

1609 Richard Hunt, S.T.P. prebend of Canterbury and dean of Durham,

1638 Samuel Ward, S.T.P. the first who enjoyed it after James I. granted it to the university of Cambridge, to be annexed to the Margaret professorship of Cambridge. He was master of Sidney college, Cambridge.

1660 John Pearson, afterwards bishop of Chester.

1673 Ralph Widdington, S.T.P.

1670 Humphrey Gower, S.T.P. master of Jesus, afterwards of St. John's college, Cambridge, and prebend of Ely.

* Blomefield's History of Norfolk.

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A.D.
1711 Robert Jenkins, S.T.P. master of St. John's college, Cambridge,
1727 Thomas Lambert, D.D.
1735 John Newcome, D.D. dean of Peterborough,
—— Mainwaring,
1807 Herbert Marsh, D.D. lord bishop of Peterborough.

Vicars.

1603 Richard Hunt, S.T.P. (also rector)
1638 Thomas Drayton,
—— Michael Beresford,
1661 John Henson,
1711 Henry Swetenham,
1740 Henry Robinson,
—— Wade,
1767 —— Gascoigne,
1801 William Walker,
1803 Ambrose Goode.

We trust we shall be excused if, in our conclusion of the account of this village, we mention in a more particular manner the name of a gentleman not less venerable for his virtue than his age; for here, retired from public life, lives Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, bart. F.R.S.* and an elder brother of the Trinity House. He was born at Blackheath in the same year with his late revered majesty George III., and is now in his 89th year. He was descended from highly honourable and respectable parents; his father, a merchant and considerable shipholder in London, and his mother, Susannah, a lady of remarkable strength of mind, sole heiress of Robert Snape, esq. of Limekilns, near Blackheath, brother of Dr. Andrew Snape, one of the queen's chaplains, and provost of King's college, Cambridge. Though thus

* See page 635.

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respectably connected, the laurels with which he is crowned are of his own gathering. Mild, ardent, brave, humane, quick in observation, and of tenacious memory, graceful in person, and of insinuating address, he possessed the *materiel* of a gentleman, a hero, and a statesman. His natural endowments were improved by cultivation, and he has shone through life in all the offices and appointments which his merit acquired, and the notice of a gracious and discerning sovereign conferred.

He was a lieutenant on board his majesty's ship Magnanime, in the action of Hawke and Conflans, 20th November 1759, and was promoted to the rank of post-captain 7th December 1770. During the greater part of the American war, he commanded the Roebuck of 44 guns, and was constantly employed in the most arduous services against the enemy. In 1778, his majesty honoured him with knighthood; in 1780, at a very critical moment, he arrived in England with dispatches from vice-admiral Arbuthnot, detailing the capture of Charlestown, with the shipping and stores in that harbour. His character, as shortly described by the vice-admiral almost fifty years ago, has suffered no tarnish from the hand of time. "The conduct of Sir Andrew Hamond of the Roebuck "deserves particular mention: whether in the great line "of service, or in the detail of duty, he has been ever "ready, forward, and animated."

Soon afterwards he was appointed lieutenant-governor of the province of Nova Scotia, and a commissioner of the navy at Halifax; situations which exhibited his integrity as a man and his humanity as a governor.

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At the peace in 1783 fresh honours awaited him: the king created him a baronet. From 1785 to 1788 he held the appointments of commodore and commander-in-chief in the river Medway; in 1793, he became deputy comptroller of the navy, and in 1794, on the death of Sir Henry Martin, he succeeded to the responsibilities of that office as principal, and presided over it with equal honour to himself and benefit to his country, for twelve years, a period of history rendered frightful by audacity, spoliation, and crime, the ravages of which, under God, were stopped only at that time by the wise councils, the stupendous machinery, nautical skill, and undaunted bravery of Britons on their native element, the sea.

During the time he held this office, he was twice elected member for Ipswich: he resigned on the death of Mr. Pitt, and in 1809, purchased in this parish an estate, on which he now resides, with faculties unimpaired, an object of veneration to his family, the delight of his friends, and an ornament to his country. He married 8th March 1779 Anne, only daughter and heiress of Henry Græme, of Hanwell Heath, in the county of Middlesex, a major in the army, who was shot through the body at the battle of Minden, and died at Saint Helena in 1786, of which island he was then lieutenant-governor.

The grandfather of major Græme removed the head of his kinsman James, the first marquis of Montrose, from the tolbooth of Edinburgh in May 1661, where it had been placed by command of the Scotch parliament May 21st 1650, after the beheading and quartering of his body, and in consequence of this he took his crest.

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1. Sir Andrew has issue, Graham Eden, rear admiral of the blue, a companion of the military order of the bath, and a deputy lieutenant of the county of Norfolk and of the Isle of Wight.

2. Caroline, relict of the honourable Francis Wheler Hood, (eldest son of Henry viscount Hood) lieutenant colonel of the third regiment of guards, who was killed at Orthes in France, in 1814, in the arms of victory, animating his troops, and nobly sustaining the honour and interest of his country.*

CONCLUSION.

HAVING now redeemed our pledge, however imperfectly, of describing the towns in the vicinity of Wisbech, we are about to take leave of our readers, and in conclusion, observe, that in the kingdom at large a greater change has perhaps taken place in its state and condition within the last forty or fifty years, than during the whole of any former century.

* Many acknowledgments are due from the compiler to the worthy vicar of Terrington, for his kindness in furnishing the principal part of the information relative to his parish, as well as for the biographical sketch of the venerable baronet. Several institutions, tending to the comfort of the industrious poor of this parish, have their origin in the vicar's solicitude to ameliorate their condition. His object is to inculcate habits of industry, by allotting a small portion of common to be managed by themselves for their own benefit. Every one must acknowledge that the practice of having the wages of labour made up out of the poor rates is most impolitic and mischievous, discouraging that good moral feeling which arises from a man's own sense of his resources. "An honest peasantry is their country's "pride." The great secret in assisting the poor is to make them agents in assisting themselves, just as it is a greater favour to teach a man the use of his own limbs, than to support or carry him.

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We witness how communication by land and water is every where facilitated, whereby intelligence circulates rapidly from the metropolis to the most remote quarters of the empire. Coaches and carriages are established in every direction, which proceed with celerity,* convenience and good regulation, so as to render every part of the kingdom accessible to its great population, without excessive expense or waste of time. Steam boats, those incomparable engines of modern invention,† cover our navigable rivers, and penetrate to the wilds of the western islands of Scotland, carrying every day the inhabitants of our cities into what were twenty years ago the most solitary spots of Europe. These engines have been aptly described as giving to the

* The mail coaches in England, it is said, run over 12,000 miles in a single night, and a newspaper published in the morning in London, is by the same night received 120 miles off, and a traveller going at night from London sleeps the second night 400 miles off. In the year 1672, when throughout Great Britain only six stage coaches were constantly going, a pamphlet was written by John Cressett, of the Charter House, for their suppression, and among the many *grave* reasons given against their continuance is the following: "Those stage coaches make gentlemen come to "London on every small occasion, which otherwise they would not do, but "upon urgent necessity. Nay, the convenience of the passage makes their "wives often come up, who, rather than come such long journies on horse-"back, would stay at home. Here, when they have come to town, they "must presently be in the mode, get fine clothes, go to plays and treats, "and by these means get such a habit of idleness and love of pleasure, that "they are uneasy ever after."

Twenty-five millions of newspapers were said to be published in 1826, in England and Wales, and upwards of one million and two hundred thousand in Scotland.

† The first invention was by the marquis of Worcester in 1663; important improvements were made by Mr. Newcomen in 1705, which led to the still more important and beautiful invention of Watt in 1769.

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fickleness of the winds and the faithlessness of the waves all the certainty of a journey by land. In fact, the whole people of this island may be said to be actuated by, and under the influence of, one common spirit of enterprize. Wisbech, which may be called the capital of the fens, has not only partaken of, but has encouraged, this general activity and exertion, for, as may have been remarked within the period above mentioned, the town has doubled itself in size; the population and buildings are increased, and its pavements, as well as the roads which approach it in all directions, are in superior condition; and the neighbouring country following the example in industry, and by improved methods in the cultivation of the soil, participates in its affluence, giving life and energy to the whole vicinity.

When we contrast its former state with the present, we cannot help admiring the enterprising spirit which has in latter times been the distinguishing characteristic of the inhabitants of this district, and the cause of its present prosperity. Until within these few years, every person living in a distant county, especially a southern one, fancied the whole of this district a marsh or fen, and the climate to be so incessantly damp, foggy, and insalubrious, and the roads so miry and impassable throughout the year, that great pecuniary advantages have been frequently sacrificed to these prejudices. This unfavourable impression is now very much softened down, if not removed. The facility of communication that exists from one part of the kingdom to another has its due influence here. People from a distance become

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familiar with the town, and are struck with its lively and bustling appearance, its general cleanliness, and the assiduous industry that pervades the inhabitants, all which give an interest to the place. Through the very great improvements which have been effected in the drainage, as well as in the general cultivation and roads of the country, not only the face, but the climate thereof, is become greatly altered for the better; wealthy proprietors now settle on their estates, and the clergy on their benefices, without much dread of having the enjoyment of their lives shortened by such residence. And as, through the richness of the soil, the cultivators procure more ample profits than reward the farmers in the upland country, full compensation is returned to them for their pains. All these blessings may be attributed in some measure to the genius of the present age. It has been so fertile in improvements upon the knowledge of our ancestors, as well as indefatigable in executing large projects, which to them appeared scarcely attainable, that by means thereof the necessary comforts of life are more widely and abundantly diffused, and the general state of society has become very considerably ameliorated. But this amelioration has been principally produced by the introduction of an improved method of education, and by the opportunity afforded the poorer classes, through liberal benefactors, of obtaining the means of solid and important instruction, such as may enable them efficiently to discharge the duties of their stations as members of society, and at the same time qualify them, through the Divine mercy, for a nobler sphere of life and action. It is perceptible that a great moral change has taken place, and to what other source can it be attributed, than a dissemination of the blessings of

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the GOSPEL among all ranks? To its influence upon the lives and characters of men, we owe this striking improvement, and whilst it has given encouragement to uprightness and industry, it has at the same time allayed the thirst for intemperance, cruelty, and oppression. The gospel, wherever it prevails, will inculcate feelings of charity and "good will towards men," for the sake of HIM "who gave his life a ransom for many," and who has directed his followers to "love one another, "for the sake of Him who redeemed them." At no period in the history of our country has such a good feeling more generally prevailed than at present, among all classes of society. May its powerful influence be continued, and may the merit thereof be ascribed to HIM "whose we are, and whom we serve!"

Wisbech, as has been seen, abounds in charitable and humane institutions, both of ancient and modern date; indeed, when any philanthropic plans of benevolence or utility have been proposed, they have always met with corresponding attention and liberality, and the purses of the respectable inhabitants are open at all times to the calls of charity and patriotism.

We have been contemplating the former and present state of this country, and before we take leave, let us glance for a few moments on what remains yet to be accomplished in the further improvement of drainage and navigation. The Nene outfall act was passed in this session of parliament,* and resolutions have been already entered into for carrying its provisions into

* See page 410.

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immediate execution. The important objects contemplated are the improvement of the outfall of the Nene waters, the draining of the North Level, South Holland, Wisbech Hundred, and several adjoining districts, containing upwards of one hundred thousand acres of land, and to reclaim from the sea, and bring into cultivation, several thousand acres of land, which will be effected by the diverting of the course of the waters which now flow over the loose and shifting sands through the estuary of Sutton Wash to the sea, into a new confined channel * of about seven miles in length, from Kinderley's Cut to Crab Hole at deep water.

Thus we see how much has been already effected by the industry and exertions of the inhabitants, and we are also aware of other improvements which will be required to a very great extent, and we doubt not but the inhabitants of Wisbech and its neighbourhood, who are sensibly alive to their real interests, will cordially unite in a temperate manner to put in execution any further judicious plans, considered to be for the general benefit of the navigation and drainage; for, in order to reap the full advantage of those works already commenced, it will become necessary, for the better purposes of navigation and drainage, to alter the course of the waters from Kinderley's Cut upwards, by making a more direct channel from thence to the town, a further distance of six miles, besides the removal of impediments now existing in the passage of the waters through the town. To burden the trade or the land too grievously would be indiscreet, but every inhabitant of the place

* See page 634.

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would rejoice in lending his aid to the accomplishment of any works within a reasonable compass, deemed necessary for the general advancement of the trade, and facility of drainage. There is a medium whereby much good may be accomplished through means, as it may be said, within our reach, and thereby add to the increasing prosperity of the town; but we should be cautious in being led away by overwhelming schemes, attainable only at an enormous and intolerable expense. The navigation should be fully adequate to receive the imports and convey away the exports, but the country, once supplied, can require no more. What is beyond its wants must produce an excess, and with the best navigation more business cannot be done than the country around demands. It therefore behoves the inhabitants to be cautious and prudent. Posterity have a claim upon us not to tax them unmercifully. We are trustees as it were for their interests, and though we may not live to witness any evil results, yet to them we owe a duty not to cast unnecessary burdens upon them through our speculations. Many of us are declining in years, and few among us may live to witness the effects of all the proposed alterations, which must entirely change the face and appearance of the whole of this district.

Notwithstanding some disadvantages, Wisbech still prospers and increases in importance, and "our hearts' "desire" is, that it may long, very long, continue to be conspicuous, not only for loyalty and honourable principles, but for stability of trade and commerce, and preserve unsullied that character, as well as maintain that independence, for which it has been hitherto

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distinguished, and we here take a final leave of our readers, by breathing and entreating a prayer for the continued welfare, happiness, and never-ceasing prosperity of this highly favoured town.

May the compiler be permitted to add one word respecting himself? In the work which is now before the public, he lays no claim to the praise of authorship, originality, or eloquence; he has had little regard to celebrity, and none to emolument: accuracy of statement he has endeavoured to attain, and nothing more. He might perhaps truly say that the compilation in its earlier details cost him some research, but then it has been the pleasing employment of that leisure with which providence has been pleased to bless him. His only regret is, that it is not more worthy of the distinguished patronage and support, with which some noble and many amiable and most respectable characters have encouraged the publication. Neither his studies nor his abilities qualify him to undertake the instruction, and better the condition of his countrymen, to throw light upon the many invaluable institutions which have made Great Britain the admiration and despair of the world, or to illustrate the glorious theme of that faith and piety which have exalted her among the nations, and rendered her a beacon light to tribes and people that yet sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Still what appeared to be in some measure within his reach, that he has cheerfully attempted, and if his labours tend but to amuse an idle hour, and still more, if they contribute to preserve the memory of events which have left sensible traces behind them, of improvements, the advantages of which are still enjoyed, and of names,

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which, however worthy of notice, would otherwise sooner sink into oblivion, his aim and object are accomplished; and in the approach of that hour which will gather him to his fathers, he may allowably comfort himself, as with the higher and nobler consolations, so with the grateful thought, that he has done what he could, and that time and opportunities have not been bestowed upon him entirely in vain.

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APPENDIX.

The following is the will referred to in page 193, as affording a picture of the superstition of the times:

WILL OF ROBERT SMITH.

10th March, 1520. In Dei Nomine, Amen. Decimo Die Mens Mar Anno Dni milessimo quingentesimo vicesimo. I Robert Smith, of Wysebeche, being of whole mind, with a good avysmt and remembrance, make my testamt and last will in ys manner and form followng: firste, I comende my sowle ovr to Almightie God, to our blessyd lady, Saynt Mary, and to all the holy copenye of hevyn, and my bodye to be beryd wth in ye chapel of our blessed Lady, in the chyrche of St. Peter, in Wysebech, as nye as it can be buryed before the imadge of our blessed Lady, in the church of Wysebeche afsd. Itm. I bequeth for my mortuary, my best beeste. And I give and beqr to the hey ault (high altar) of the sd churche for my tythes and offerings neglygently forgotten 20s. Itm. I gyve and beq to the building of the steeple of the said church of Wysebeche £20.—£5. the begynning of the building of the sd steeple, and within half a year next after that other £5, and £10. within half a year next aft, so that the hole £20. be paid within a yere, when the said steeple is beganne to be made or builded with the first money.

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Itm. I gyff and bequeth to the aldman and brethren of the gyld of the holy blessyd trinity in the said church, dedicated and hallowed in the honor of St.. Peter, for ye entire love, devotion, laud, and honore which I have and bear towds the blessed Virgyn Mary, and the maintenance and upholdyng of divine service, our Lady mass, and other prayers, which I desyre and wyll the said alderman and his brethren to mayntayne in the chapell of our blessyd Lady, within the sd church of St. Peter, 9A. of fre land in West Walton, 7A. of land fre and copy in Dyxon Field, 2½A. of fre land in New Field, in Walton, 24A. of fre land in Pygges Drove, in Leverington, 11A. in Leverington, 7A. in Leverington, 5A. of fen land in Wisbech, 6A. in Fenland Drove, 7A. in Newbridge Drove, and 1½A. in Wisbech.

Itm. I gyff and beq to the alderman and brethren of the said gylde of Wysebeche for my perpetual obitt, to be kepte yrly in the said chapel of our blessed Lady, two messes lying together in the New Mkytte of Wysbech, and 12A. of land fre and copy, and a tenement. Itm. I gyff to the alderman and brethren of the said gyld the tenement on the Castell Dyke. Itm. I gyff and beq to the aldermen and brethren of the said gylde of the blessyd trinitye in Wysbeche afsd, my five messuages on the Castell Dyke, late Edmund Buckworth's, wherein said Edmund now dwells; and the aldermen and brethren of the sd gyld to sell the said messuages to the best profytt of the gyld, and the money wrof coming to be bestowed in buying of land when it may be conveniently boughte or purchased.

Provided always yff the sd Edmund will pay £40. within three yeres after my dethe, he to have the said messes.—All these my messes and lands I gyffe to the aldermen and brethren of the sd gylde of the holy trynitye in Wisbech under this condition:

Frst. I wyll that the alderman and his brethren shall every yere kepe myne obytt in the chapel of our blessed Lady, the day of my anniversary, with seven priests and five clerks, gyving to the vicar or his parish priest 8*d.*, to the schoolmaster 8*d.*, and the three brotherhood priests yche of them 6*d.* and two other prsts yche of them 4*d.*, and the trynitye clerk 4*d.*, and yche of the five

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clerks 2*d.*, and to 30 chyldern and 40 poor men yche of them 1*d.*; and these afsd psons to be psent at my obytt, and to syng by note placebo and dirige: and in the mornyng next they, betwixt 9 and 10 of the cloke, to syng masse of requiem, with the collect, begynning with "Deus "cuiq summa spes nre redemptcois," with the secret and post communion of the same, praying for my soule and the soules of John and Agnes, my father and mother, and all my ancestors soules, and all crystn soules: also I will that the sexton have 2*d.* and the 2 clerks for ringing 12*d*; and at the said mass I wyll that the alderman or his deputye, with the treasurers and two of his brethren, shall offyr at the said mass, the alderman to offyr 2*d.* and to have for his labor 4*d.* and every of his 4 brethren to offyr a penny, and to have for his labor 2*d.*

Itm. I wyll that myne executors shall require the alderman and brethern of the sd gyld, shall fynd the scholmaster or com preeste of the brethern, the wych three time in the week shall take a special collect in his mass, called Deus cui summa Spes nre redemptcois, remembering the soulis of me the said Robt and my friends before specyfyed, with the secrett and post commuin of the said collect. Itm. I will that the said scholemr or his chyldren shall daily, when the schole is kept, sey bothe mornyng and evening this anthem: Liba nos, salva nos, o beata trinitas, sit nomen dni benedictum, and the respond, with collect, omnipotens sempiterne deus dedisti nobis, &c. De profundis, with the prayers for the soulis above rehearsed; and the sd scholemaster to have over and above his stipend yerely for his dyligence, in performing the sd premises 6*s.* 8*d.* to be paid by the alderman and brethren, and if they refuse the performation of my will, then my executors shall sell my sd lands, and with the moneye to find the scholemr or a priest to sing for me and my friends in the sd church of St. Peter, in Wysebech afsd, and to fynd the sd yerely obytt with the sd money, to be spent in such charitable uses.

Furthermore, I wyll ytt yff the alderman and his brethren be content to pform the sd conditns, then indres to be drawn under learned counsell for surety of the same, wherein they shall be bound in manner and form as the churchwardens of the sd church be bound to performation.

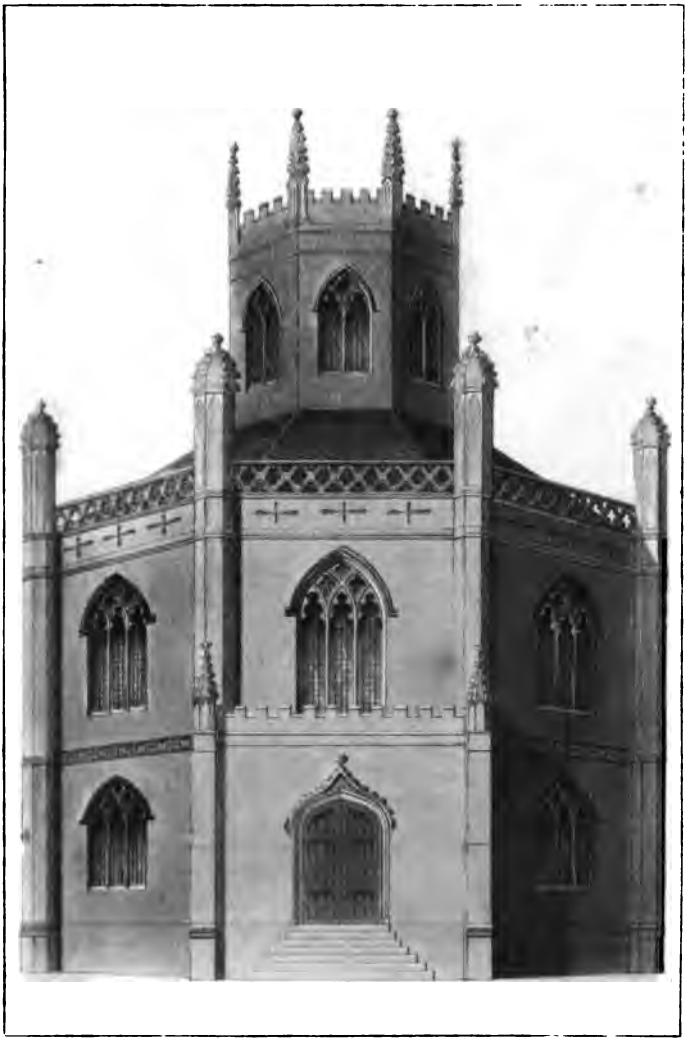
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CHAPEL OF EASE.

THE situation of the piece of ground first intended for the erection of the chapel of ease being disapproved of by a majority of the subscribers, the same was abandoned, and a new site in the Old Market-place fixed upon, by purchasing certain buildings and ground there for such purpose; and the act having received the royal assent on the 14th July, the subscribers were anxious to proceed with the work without loss of time. Public meetings were called to consider of an eligible plan, and after mature consideration, that of an octagon shape was preferred, and a plan thereof, and of the pews and sittings therein, and of the vaults and cemeteries, being approved by the lord bishop, the same was unanimously adopted, and on Monday the 6th of August following, the first stone of this chapel was laid by the reverend Thomas Pattison Holmes, B.A. as the nephew and representative of Dr. Jobson, the venerable vicar, then unhappily confined to his house by indisposition and infirmity, who, by his munificent endowment and subscription,* may well be called the founder of the chapel; the other members of the building committee were also present, and assisted at the ceremony. The reverend Mr. Holmes, on laying the stone, offered up in few words an appropriate prayer, invoking the favour of Heaven on the undertaking, and calling upon Almighty God, for the sake of his son Jesus Christ our Lord, to prosper it with his especial blessing; to which, one of the members of the building committee added a short invocation, that the Lord would favourably approve of setting apart that place for the performance of religious worship, and that he would bless it with such success as might tend most to his glory, and the furtherance of the happiness of his people, both spiritual and temporal. The building is designed to accommodate one thousand persons, of which three hundred seats are to be gratuitous for the poor. The height, from the foundation to the top of the pinnacle on the lantern, is intended to be eighty-eight feet; the length, from the entrance of the porch to the communion table, one hundred and two feet, and the interior diameter of the octagon, diagonally, about sixty feet.

* See page 255.

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WISBECH CHAPEL OF EASE.

This Engraving is Inscribed to the Revd A. Johson, D.D. Vicar of Wisbech. with sentiments of high Esteem. By his attached Friend. Wm Watson.

Published by H. & J. Leach Wisbech. 1827

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Some new subscribers have added their names, and others have increased their former subscriptions, as under:

	Shares.	Amount.
Original Subscriptions*	126	£6300
The Rev. J. H. Sparke, rector of Leverington	2	100
——— Dr. Sandiford, rector of Newton ..	2	100
——— W. G. Townley, 2d subscription..	2	100
William Watson, ... ditto	3	150
H. J. Nicholls, esq.	3	150
William Orton, esq.	3	150
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Richard Baxter, ... 2d subscription ..	1	50
Steed Girdlestone, ... ditto	1	50
John Wing, ... ditto	1	50
	150	£7500

It is stated in page 218 of this work, that the charter of king Charles II. would appear in the appendix; but as an abstract of the original one of king Edward VI. is already introduced,† and through the liberality of the corporate body, several hundred copies of king Charles IId's confirmatory charter have been printed and very generally distributed amongst the inhabitants of the town, who are the principal parties interested, so that every individual desirous of a copy had the opportunity of possessing one, it is thought unnecessary to swell out this volume by the introduction of such last-mentioned charter and translation at length here.

* See page 257. † See page 174.

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